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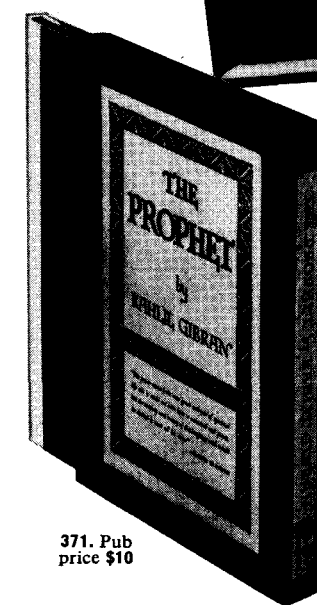
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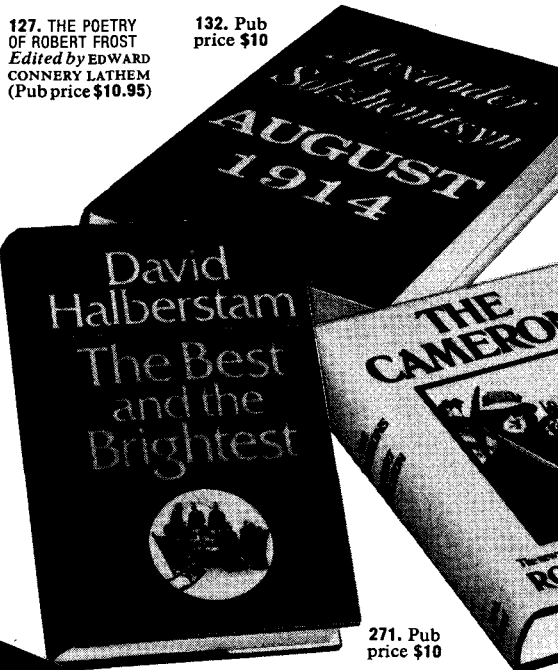
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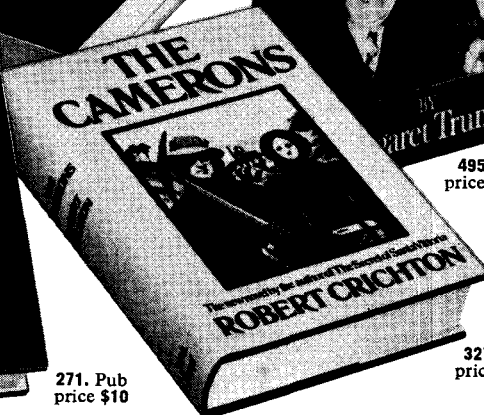
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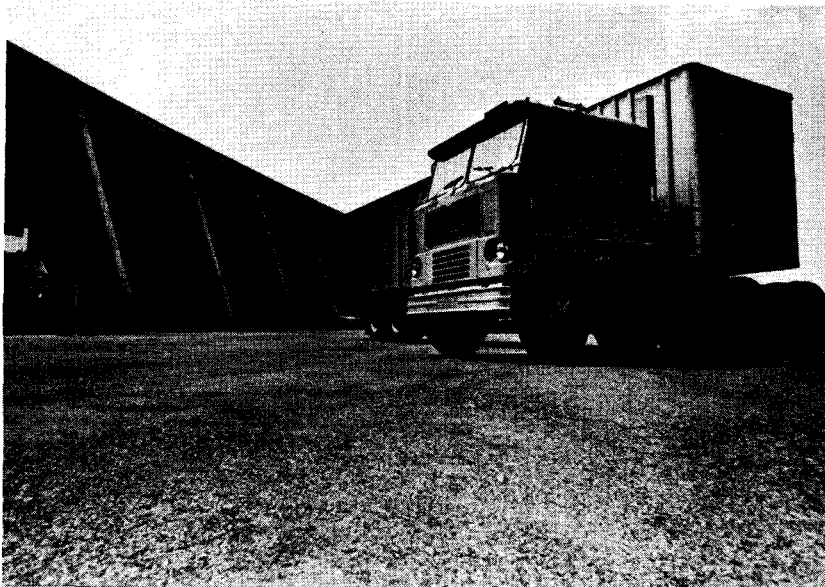
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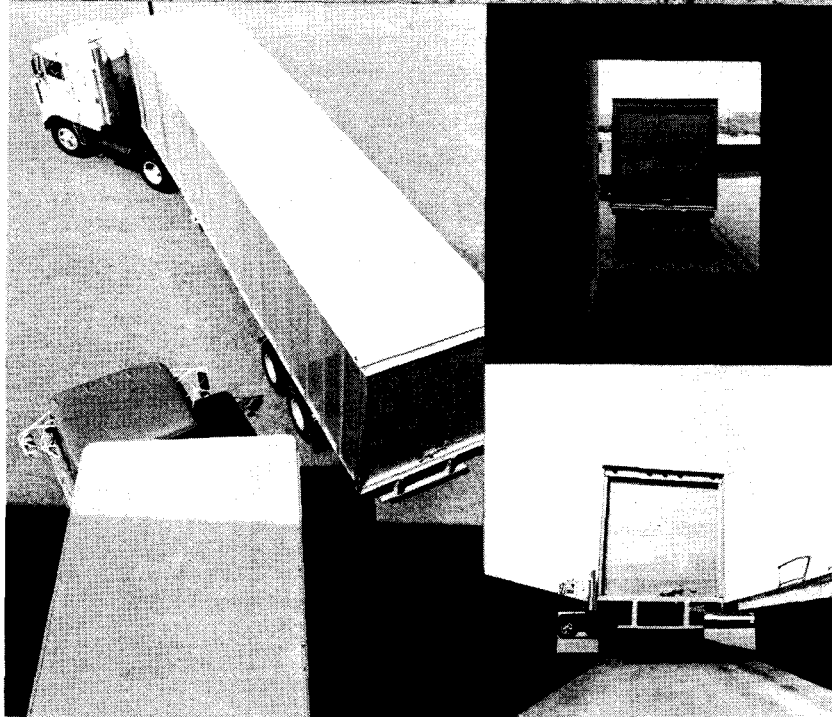
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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

Before the turn of the century the first editor of this magazine, James Russell Lowell, wrote: "It was in making education not only common to all, but in some sense compulsory on all, that the destiny of the free republics of America was practically settled."

A belief in public education as a means—perhaps the principal means—to equality of opportunity has always been a component of the American Dream. Until now. In recent years, men and women with keen minds, impressive credentials, and, surely, good intentions have subjected that belief to severe scrutiny. It may be, some of them conclude, that when it comes to seeking equality of opportunity in our society "schools make no difference." The conclusion is, of course, highly arguable. So it is being hotly, acrimoniously debated at this time by the social and political scientists who make it their business to divine the workings of the American system and to suggest ways of making it work better, or less inequitably.

Later in these pages, Godfrey Hodgson, an English journalist with much experience in observing the American scene, tells how doubt and controversy have come to cloud the conviction that a major cause of inequality in this country derives from inequality in education. Simply as a story of a scuffle in the Groves of Academe, it is an interesting one—academic reputations at stake, backbiting, diligent works of research and analysis excoriated and sometimes deliberately misrepresented, charges of pilfered research and scientific heresy—in short, to those of us mercifully engaged otherwise, still another case of the statistic-and-footnote elitists chopping each other into cat food. But its implications reach far out into society, implications not only for the future financing of public education but also for the future of a more recent part of the American Dream: the ideal of racial integration.

The most important part of the story is yet to come. Implicit in research is the possibility that discovery or invention will produce unintended, sometimes appalling results. Heisenberg's principle can apply to social research as well as to physical: inquiry into a phenomenon frequently, if not in-

variably, has the effect of altering that which is being investigated.

The education researchers can see by now that in the wrong hands, with twists and interpretations that may dismay them, their studies will be exploited to inhibit spending for more and better schooling and to slow even more the lagging pace of racial integration. That is no reason, of course, to destroy the microscopes, lock up the research libraries, and turn off the computers. If the world is round it is round; no amount of damning Copernicus as an underminer of the Faith could refute that discovery.

As the social scientists squabble, President Nixon demands from Congress immense cuts in federal moneys for education, particularly for elementary and secondary school programs. From the other side, a two-year study by the Senate Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity acknowledges many of the social scientists' new findings, but insists that the answer is not less spending, but more money spent more intelligently. Schools *do* make a difference, says the committee majority, and that will be proven when adequate schooling is brought to children who are "segregated" from it by reason of race and economic and social class. But views like these, Hodgson reports, have lost some prestigious champions. So, spending more money or less, maintaining our commitment to education or retreating from it, we may soon see whether Heisenberg's principle applies to an American ideal.

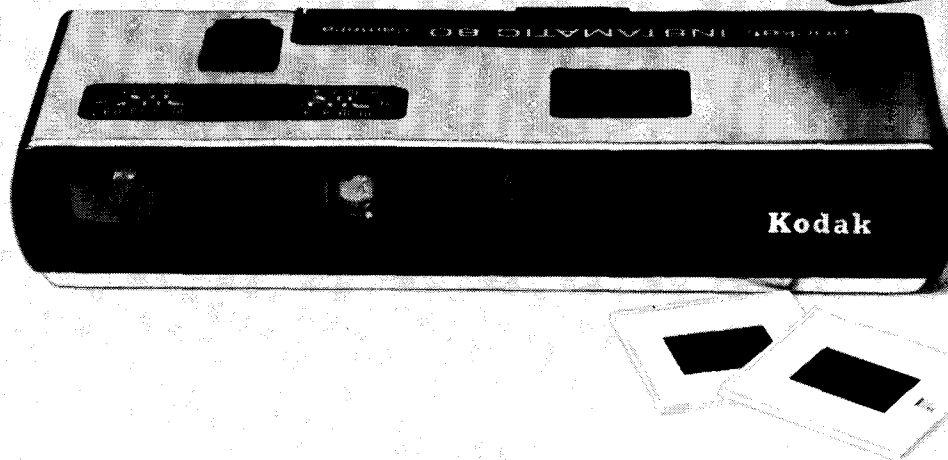
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The Atlantic rarely reprints material that has appeared elsewhere in the United States, but an exception is made in the case of "Children in the Field," on page 54. It was written originally for the Woodbridge, New Jersey, *News Tribune*. The author, David Rogers, served as an infantry medic in Vietnam and is now a graduate student in urban studies at Harvard. In a few hundred words he says more about the war in Vietnam than some who have written volumes.

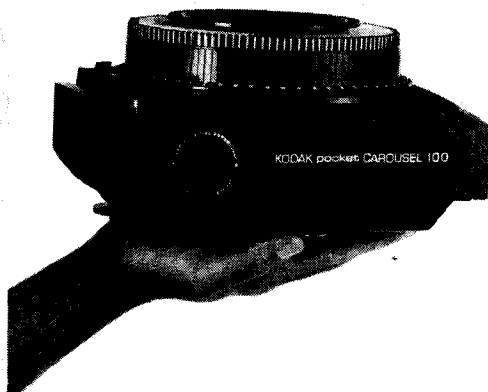
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REPORTS & COMMENT

WASHINGTON

Washington is a city that is waiting—to see what the President is going to do now, at home and abroad. In foreign policy, attention is focused on the Vietnam settlement; but beyond that loom relations with Europe and Japan, which the President has said will get more emphasis in his second term, and defense spending, which threatens to rise at an alarming rate.

The agreement negotiated with Hanoi in October, 1972, seemed to crown President Nixon's Vietnamization policy with greater success than his opponents had thought possible. Under this agreement, Hanoi would release U.S. prisoners, and there would be a cease-fire, one likely to last at least long enough to safeguard the final stages of U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam and to afford South Vietnam a breathing spell in which to continue strengthening itself. If the cease-fire were to break down eventually, former Defense Secretary Laird indicated that the South Vietnamese could defend themselves without U.S. forces.

But the Administration, in making public the October agreement, claimed that it would end not only the U.S. role in Vietnam but the war itself. It did not take as shrewd a politician as President Thieu of South Vietnam long to point out the several respects in which the agreement fell short of this goal. Perhaps others in Washington made the same point to Mr. Nixon. In any

event, Henry Kissinger was sent off to Paris after the election to improve his handiwork. When the ensuing negotiations collapsed in December in the face of new demands from both sides, the Administration justified the resumed bombing of North Vietnam largely in terms of its optimum objective: ending the war.

Getting explicit

As a consequence, when negotiations began again in early 1973, the Administration still faced the central question: whether the United States' objective was to extricate itself in a way that would merely give the South Vietnamese a good chance to defend themselves, or whether it was determined to achieve a political settlement that would assure South Vietnam's independence. The January accord is seen differently by both sides in this respect. For the future, the President faces hard questions about what the United States will do if the agreement breaks down. It is probable that President Thieu wanted pledges that U.S. forces would re-intervene in the event of a breakdown; domestic critics of the war expected contrary assurances.

So at the start of his second term, with a cease-fire arranged at last, the President is still confronted with a choice as to what we are about in Vietnam. Most members of the Congress have long since concluded that we cannot now do more than extricate the United States on terms

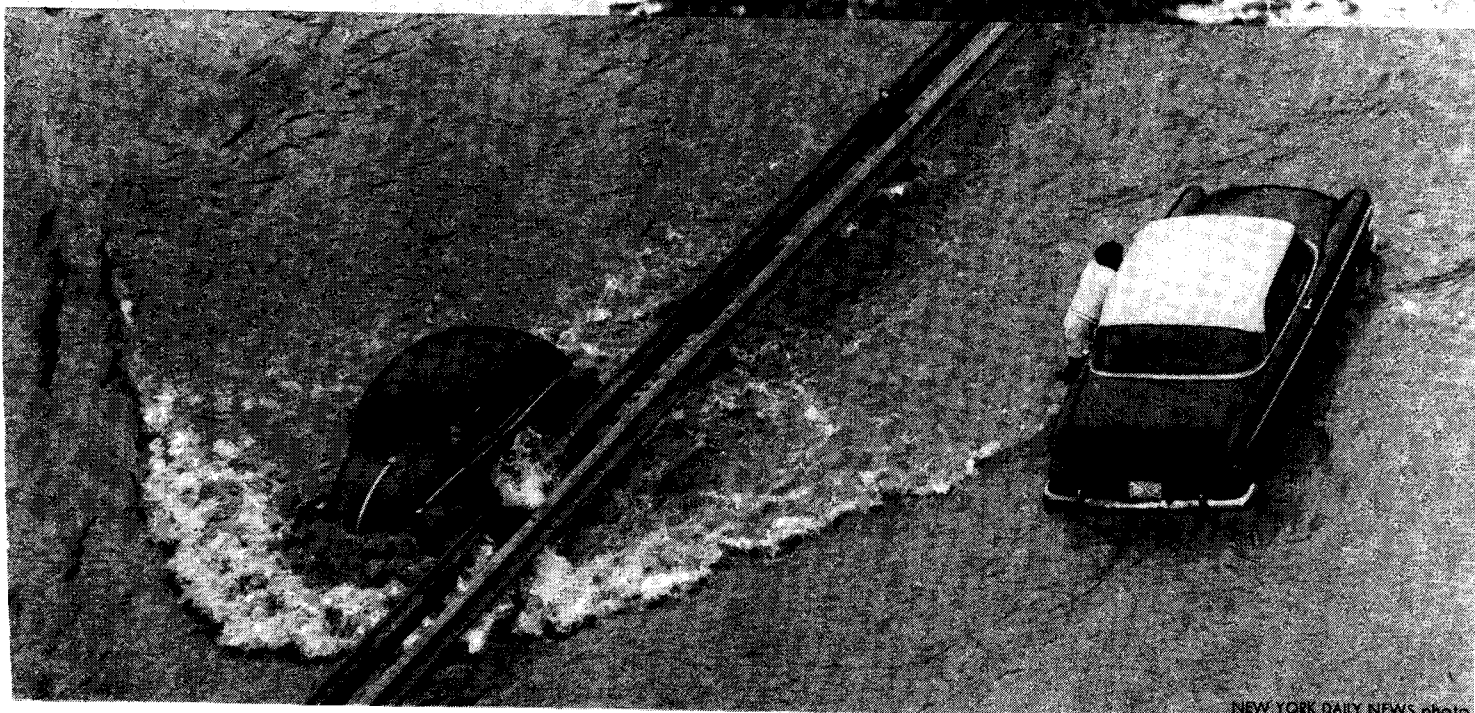
that give the people of South Vietnam a chance to defend themselves.

It will be difficult to fulfill this course in the face of uncertain events in Vietnam, and in a way that avoids divisions in America, unless the President's decisions on post-cease-fire problems in Vietnam are consistent with this goal. Only then will the country be able to turn its attention to new problems in foreign policy that are a good deal more important than Vietnam.

Foremost among these is our relationship with Western Europe and Japan. This too will pose hard choices for the President. The traditional way to improve interallied relations would be to focus separately on our relations with Europe and our relations with Japan. Sometime in 1973 the President would go to Europe to discuss the state of NATO and mutual troop withdrawals, and also to advance U.S.-European dialogue on economic issues; later he might go to Japan, to talk about the balance of power in Asia and to have an exchange of views with the Japanese about economic matters.

Summitry revisited

This pattern of putting Europe and Japan in different compartments made sense after World War II, when Communist threats in Europe and Japan were urgent. These threats posed very different problems for the two areas. The pattern has persisted, however, long



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WASHINGTON

after circumstances have changed. The Communist threat to Europe and Japan has waned; the main problem now (see February *Atlantic*, "Report on the Common Market," by Don Cook) is how to arrange the growing movement of goods and money between increasingly interdependent industrial regions. The postwar economic system that was devised at Bretton Woods to this end is being undermined by change: greater affluence in Europe and Japan, declining acceptance of the once dominant American role, and new social and political trends within the industrial countries. If a new system is not devised to take its place, we could see a return to the trade wars and competitive devaluations of the 1930s. This would slow growth in the United States and other industrial areas; and it would prevent these areas from working effectively together to help the poor nations. More importantly, it might stimulate a revival of nationalism that could drive the three great industrial regions apart, creating pressures for Japan to rearm on a dangerous scale and making it hard to preserve stability in Europe.

These economic problems cannot be handled by the United States dealing separately with Europe and Japan. Their solution will require that all three industrial areas act in concert. The international negotiations on monetary reform which have begun and the negotiations on trade which will soon follow can progress only if all three areas take full responsibility for the outcome. Even then, success will be uncertain. A great many special interests in each of these industrial regions will feel threatened by these negotiations, and overcoming their objections will be a formidable political task.

The best chance of surmounting these obstacles lies in dramatizing to the public the high political stakes involved. This can best be done if heads of government get into the act. The President's instinct in seeking allied summitry is sound; but U.S.-European summitry will not meet the need. No European government will commit itself—any more than the United States

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WASHINGTON

would—to far-reaching economic reform without assurances of Japanese cooperation. And no Japanese government will find it politically possible to give these assurances unless its leaders have been involved in high-level discussions from the start. Not only would it be a waste of the President's time to discuss these issues in Europe before going to Japan; it would also be counter-productive if it triggered more Japanese suspicion and resentment.

If traditional patterns of U.S.-European summitry are the wrong answer, the right answer is not easy to find. The President might propose a meeting of the heads of government of Japan, the European Community countries, and the United States to discuss common economic concerns. Something like this was proposed by Senator Jacob Javits, Republican of New York, last December. At such a meeting, heads of government might define the goals which they will seek to achieve in monetary and trade negotiations and make clear that success or failure of these negotiations will determine not narrow economic advantage but whether a safer world can be built.

There is reason to be skeptical that this will happen, for the President is not as comfortable with economic as with security problems, and he is used to dealing separately with Europe and Japan; but skeptics were confounded by his initiatives in dealing with Russia and China. If he perceives the need for, and opportunity in, interallied relations as clearly as he saw them in East-West relations, he may prove equally innovative.

There are, of course, obstacles. The bureaucracy in most countries would like heads of government to stay out of international economic matters; these are considered too "complicated" for politicians. Europeans would prefer to do business with the United States bilaterally, leaving the job of arranging Japanese concurrence for later action by the United States. There is always a risk of failure in any international economic meeting; and the fact that powerful domestic groups are directly affected will compound the

wariness of heads of governments about confronting that risk. For all these reasons, it will be more difficult to arrange U.S.-European-Japanese summitry on economic problems than presidential trips to Europe and Japan, in which familiar security issues can be addressed. But the potential rewards, in terms of interallied relations, will be much greater.

Scalpel

Interallied relations will also bear on another looming problem: defense spending. Most projections of the federal budget—for example, by the Brookings Institution in *Setting National Priorities* and by the American Enterprise Institute—show a widening gap between future expenditures and revenues, even if few new domestic programs are launched. This means higher taxes, or more inflation, or ruthless government economy—or all three. Against this background and that of improving East-West relations, it requires a vivid imagination to expect that the Congress and the country will allow the real costs of U.S. defense to rise. And yet that is precisely what will happen if currently projected defense programs go forward. The question, therefore, is not whether these projected programs will be cut back, but how.

There are two main ways to do this. One is to search out inefficient and marginal expenditures in both weapons systems and support forces (headquarters, training, logistics, and so on). The other is to cut force levels, notably the conventional forces (Army divisions and supporting tactical land-based and sea-based air groups) that absorb most of the defense budget. To some extent, both courses will likely be followed. The question is where the main emphasis will be placed.

In periods of fiscal pressure, the temptation to emphasize the second course is great. That temptation is compounded in the current situation by the way in which conventional force levels have traditionally been justified: as a response to the Soviet threat.

At this time, when tensions are declining in Europe and Northeast Asia—the main areas where conventional forces are deployed and

might have to be used—this justification does not carry much conviction. The present rationale for maintaining substantial conventional forces lies elsewhere, in the political rather than the military domain. Although the focus of our relationship with Western Europe and Japan in the 1970s will be on economic issues, the health of that relationship will also hinge on a continuing substantial U.S. military presence in these areas.

The point becomes clear if we look at the situation in Western Europe. The threat of Soviet attack on this area is minimal. Willy Brandt is worried by proposals to withdraw U.S. forces now in Europe not because he fears East-West war but because he hopes for East-West conciliation and mutual troop withdrawals, and doubts that this can be achieved against a background of unilateral withdrawals of American troops from Europe. He is also shrewd enough to perceive that the apparent West German military dominance in Western Europe that would result from U.S. withdrawals would cause enough alarm among Germany's neighbors to threaten Western European unity. And he has no trouble foreseeing that the European reaction to U.S. withdrawals would make it more difficult for the United States and Europe to work together on the economic problems that will be the main items on their agenda.

The situation in Northeast Asia is somewhat comparable. It is difficult to imagine the Russians and Chinese attacking either Japan or Korea. But Japanese confidence that the United States will maintain forces in Korea and will preserve naval superiority in the area about Japan is an important element in their belief that they need not rearm on a larger scale than required for defense of their home islands. If that confidence is shaken by U.S. withdrawals from Korea and by withdrawal of the U.S. fleet from Northeast Asia, Japanese domestic pressures for rearmament—including, perhaps, nuclear armament—will mount. The resulting tensions would threaten not only U.S.-Japanese relations but also Prime Minister Tanaka's effort to improve Sino-Japanese relations and stability in Asia as a whole.

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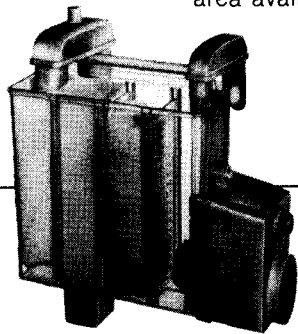
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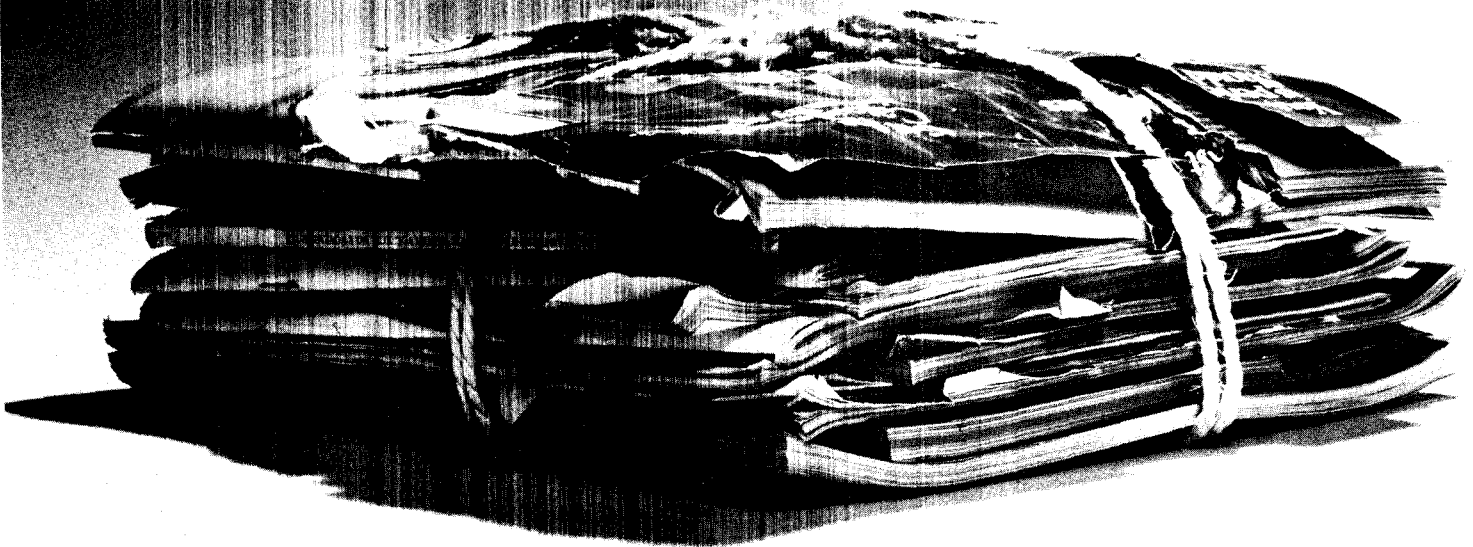
WASHINGTON

There will probably be some reductions—for example, in U.S. bases in Japan—in any event. And if Brandt's and Tanaka's efforts to promote détente continue to go forward, the atmosphere in both Western Europe and Japan should change in ways that will make it possible to cut U.S. forces even further without damaging U.S. relations with these areas. And there might well be mutual troop withdrawals in Europe. But these changes haven't happened yet, and Brandt and Tanaka both believe that the best way to get from here to there is to maintain powerful U.S. forces in Europe and Northeast Asia in the meantime. This will be difficult to do if the present overall level of U.S. conventional ground combat and tactical air forces is drastically reduced.

There are other ways to save money on defense without cutting heavily into conventional force levels. Substantial economies can be achieved by resisting pressure for further military pay and pension increases, reducing the large military support functions, slowing modernization of weapons, eliminating some strategic systems of doubtful utility (for example, in air defense), and closing unnecessary military bases in the United States. The obstacles to going this route are great. Holding down defense spending by improving cost-effectiveness, as Robert McNamara found out, runs up against powerful forces of inertia and self-interest. The personal intervention of not only the Secretary of Defense but, on occasion, the President is needed to overcome these obstacles. This intervention involves some political costs for the President, since influential groups are likely to be offended or injured. A substantial investment of presidential time and prestige is required; and the President has lots of other important matters to which he wants to devote that time and prestige.

So this choice, like the others discussed above, will not be easy. The President will be reluctant to embark on a major campaign to persuade the military and the Congress to accept these kinds of changes in

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defense policy, as he will be to accept the political costs and risks of sailing into the uncharted waters of U.S.-European-Japanese economic summitry.

The instinct of any President is to evade such hard choices in order to safeguard his political capital. In many cases evasion is both successful and wise. But on occasion—as President Nixon found in his 1972 summitry abroad—the choice needs to be made, and the country and the President both gain if this is done.

But more than presidential decisions will be required. For what is involved in these choices—as to how the United States proceeds beyond cease-fire in Vietnam, how it maneuvers to strengthen interallied relations, and how it attempts to bring defense costs under control—is an even more important question: whether we can turn away from traditional East-West concerns to address pressing economic problems in the non-Communist world.

The choices the President makes will tell us whether this is the direction that he means to take; but the way in which the choices are carried out by the bureaucracy will tell us whether the change can, in fact, be accomplished.

Bringing defense costs under control will require tough-minded management; the record of the new Secretary of Defense, Elliot Richardson, suggests that he may provide that management. Carrying through to success complex economic and political negotiations with Western European and Japanese governments that are as preoccupied as our own with protecting powerful domestic economic interests will be even more difficult.

Success will require an American foreign-policy establishment that can focus on economic concerns as vigorously as it did when the present international economic system was being built after World War II. In that period, such strong-minded experts as Will Clayton and Dean Acheson served a Secretary of State (George Marshall) who gave them his full support and who was the President's main foreign-policy adviser. Now the State Department's role has declined, and the main interests of the President's Special Assistant for National Security

Affairs, Henry Kissinger, are not economic.

Perhaps the gap will be filled by Treasury Secretary George Shultz, who is in charge of overall economic policy. Or perhaps the change of direction will be signaled by the appointment of a Secretary of State whose main interests are economic. The candidate most frequently discussed is John Connally. If Connally should take the same mercantilist view of international economic policy in the State Department that he did in the Treasury, this would not do much to strengthen interallied relations, to put it mildly. But if Connally proved as quick a learner at State as he did at Treasury, where his conversion to price and wage controls was as rapid as it was unexpected, his perception that stubborn and important differences of view between the main industrial countries are overshadowed by their common interest in maintaining a workable international system might lead him in needed new directions. However the necessity for vigorous economic leadership is met within the government, it will have to be done if a new phase of foreign policy is to be effective.

—HENRY OWEN

LIBERIA

Funerals can confuse a visitor to Monrovia, the capital of Liberia. Is he on the western coast of Africa or in New Orleans? First, the big brass band marches down Broad Street on a hot Sunday afternoon, playing rollicking hymns, not exactly "Didn't He Ramble?" but something like it. Then comes the second line, the youngsters singing and waving their open palms high in the air, and a soccer team, in uniform, tossing a ball to the rhythms.

The casket follows, carried by a jaunty crowd moving to the beat. Schoolchildren in uniform and college graduates in mortarboards step behind. Finally, a long line of mourners, walking two by two, closes the parade. They wear black dresses and suits made of cloth far too thick for the incessant sun. Some men sport Homburgs.

It shouldn't be a shock to come across a New Orleans funeral an

ocean away in West Africa, but it is. A few moments' reflection, however, produces the obvious logic for it all. Slaves from Africa, with their traditions of joyous mourning, turned the sedate white man's funeral into a black man's jazzy funeral in Louisiana. Freed slaves then carried it back to Africa. But, despite the logic, it is hard for an American visitor to stifle his surprise.

Mimicry

The sensation quickly drives home a reality of Liberia. A century ago, when Sir Richard Burton, the British explorer, visited independent Liberia, he called it "the Yankee Doodle niggery republic." Outsiders customarily have snickered at the little African settlement of former American slaves who spent so much of their energy mimicking the white society that once ruled them in the antebellum South. In fact, Liberia cannot be understood without an understanding of its ties to the United States. The United States has acted as a kind of indirect, half-hearted, peripheral, offhanded colonial ruler in Liberia.

This special relationship has helped create a special country. The United States has taken some of the benefits of colonialism from Liberia and provided some of the services, but it has never had any of the responsibilities. This lack of responsibility has insured minority rule in Liberia.

Protected by America, Liberia is and always has been a settler colony, much like those of southern Africa where white minorities rule masses of black Africans. In the case of Liberia, the settlers, unlike the Portuguese of Angola or the British of Rhodesia, are not white but black—former slaves from America. There is, of course, a vital difference. Since the skin color of the rulers and the ruled is the same, Liberian society has a flexibility inconceivable in southern Africa. Nevertheless, an oligarchy of 45,000 Americo-Liberians (as the descendants of the settlers are called) still maintains political power over almost 1.5 million indigenous tribalists. The reasons for this are rooted in the relationship with the United States.

It is hard not to notice the signs of American influence. Liberians use wrinkled, faded American dollar bills as currency. The police wear the summer uniforms of New York City police. A newcomer may have to look twice to be sure of the difference between the American and Liberian flags: the Liberian flag has one white star on a field of blue and eleven red and white stripes. Radio announcers read the news in American Southern black accents. On Sundays, the radio offers little but American gospel music. Monrovia is the only capital in black Africa where almost half the cars are oversized American ones.

The comparison should not be carried too far. Although there are a few rotting, two-story, porticoed, plantation-style houses in Monrovia, the city no longer has the feel of the Old South. That was partially destroyed during the long administration of President William Tubman, who ordered the construction of the government skyscrapers that look like Miami Beach hotels, and by squatters who have set up ramshackle tin houses.

The city's movie theaters, when they are not showing Italian-made Westerns, show old and new American movies, but that is true of every English-speaking country in Africa. Monrovia's night life is mainly for visiting whites, especially sailors. Its strip joints are owned by Lebanese, and the strippers and B-girls are also Lebanese. Although there is no more drinking in Monrovia than in any other African city, bars are an important diversion, and alcoholism is a growing problem here as elsewhere in Africa.

Washington connection

Though Liberia is an undemocratic, one-party state, politics too has an American ring. Congress meets on Capitol Hill. The President has his office in the Executive Mansion. The only political party is the True Whig Party. The geographic names are familiar. Aside from Monrovia, named for the fifth President of the United States, there are Maryland County, Providence Island, New Georgia, Harrisburg, Greenville, Louisiana, Harper, and Buchanan.

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LIBERIA

million, perhaps \$500 million, half of all American investment in black Africa. Trade amounts to almost \$100 million a year, with the United States supplying almost half of all Liberia's imports. Liberia depends heavily on the United States for its canned and packaged food, machinery, vehicles, and spare parts. The United States is also Liberia's biggest customer, buying a quarter of all its exports, mostly latex, crude rubber, and iron. No other supplier of economic assistance to Liberia comes near to matching the U.S. aid figure of almost \$300 million. Four thousand five hundred Americans live there, mostly missionaries, U.S. officials, Peace Corps volunteers, and businessmen.

Since 1959, the United States and Liberia have had a mutual defense pact. It is a vaguely worded document, but Liberians believe that the United States will come to their aid in case of attack. The United States arms the three-thousand-man Liberian army and trains it with a military advisory mission of seventeen men.

Judging by statistics, Liberia has not been hurt economically by its close ties to the United States. In 1969, the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) ranked Liberia fourth in Africa on a special index of development. Among African nations, its per capita gross domestic product is second only to that of Gabon.

Although Liberians own only two merchant ships, Liberia, on the record, is the world's largest maritime power. At the beginning of 1972, shipowners had registered more than 2200 vessels there, putting Liberia ahead of Norway, Japan, and Britain in ship registration. Ships sail under the Liberian "flag of convenience" because of the low fees—\$1.20 a ton on registration and 10 cents a ton annual tax. In Britain, a shipowner would have to pay registration fees of \$39 a ton on the first 1500 tons and \$19.50 for every additional 500 tons. Some critics contend that shipowners also like the Liberian flag because Monrovia is not as fussy about safety rules as are other governments. Whatever

the reasons, the attraction of the Liberian maritime flag earns the government \$5 million a year.

The statistics on Liberia's economic status must be treated with care. Much of the nation's wealth is in the hands of foreigners, who ship a good deal of it away. Moreover, the gap between rich and poor is very wide in Liberia, probably wider than in almost any other African country. In 1966, for example, the government reported that per capita income for Liberia's subsistence farmers, who make up two-thirds of the population, was \$43 a year. The other third in the money economy earned an average of \$346 a year. Even here, the statistics distorted the story, for they did not reveal how much of the income in the money economy was earned by the small Americo-Liberian elite.

Settling in

Liberia's American ties are rooted in history. The country was settled in 1822 by the American Colonization Society with the help of a grant of \$100,000 from the U.S. Congress. The society was made up of white philanthropists and white slaveholders. The philanthropists wanted to relieve the distress of a half-million black freedmen in the United States. The slaveholders wanted to get rid of a potential source of trouble.

The first black settlers were put ashore at Cape Mesurado, the site of Monrovia today. The local chiefs had been persuaded at gunpoint by an agent of the society and a U.S. naval lieutenant to sell the cape to them. The sale used up little of the congressional grant. The chiefs sold the land for less than \$300 worth of muskets, beads, tobacco, gunpowder, bars of iron, iron pots, silverware, hats, coats, shoes, pipes, nails, looking glasses, decanters, tumblers, beef, pork, and biscuits.

The American Colonization Society never accomplished what it set out to do, for it gradually lost support at home. In pre-Civil War politics, it became too closely identified with the losing cause of Henry Clay. More important, the society enraged William Lloyd Garrison and the other abolitionists, who looked on Liberia as a palliative that eased the conscience of whites

without dealing with the real problem: slavery. Garrison mounted a vitriolic campaign against the society. By the end of the Civil War, the society had settled no more than thirteen thousand freedmen and six thousand blacks recaptured from slave ships.

The black settlers, who declared a republic in 1847, behaved much like the white settlers in southern Africa. The former slaves kept to the coast, occasionally sending troops out to pacify rebellious tribes. The settlers forced the tribalists to labor for them and, like the Portuguese, sent labor out of the country to work on foreign plantations. Because of the latter practice, a commission of the League of Nations accused Liberia in 1930 of practices "scarcely distinguishable from slave-raiding and slave-trading." The tribal peoples were not granted citizenship until 1904 and could not vote until the late President William V. S. Tubman came to power in 1944.

The Americo-Liberians were so different from the aborigines, as they liked to call the others, that Liberian history records a black explorer, Benjamin Anderson, who, just like David Livingstone and Henry M. Stanley and Sir Richard Burton, set off into the interior in 1868 to see what darkest Liberia was like.

A visitor to the Executive Mansion in Monrovia today can see the portraits of the early Presidents and sense how different the settlers were from the Africans who lived in Liberia. Most were obviously mulatto, and they dressed like American Presidents of the time, with high collars, cravats, and gentlemen's coats. In fact, Joseph J. Roberts, the first President, who was at most an octoroon, looks like an unbearded Abraham Lincoln, with the same high cheekbones, hardened features, piercing eyes, thick hair, and a mole.

The Americo-Liberians evolved a society based on what they knew about the formalities of the aristocratic white class that once ruled them in the American South. The elite wore top hats and hoopskirts and lived in mansions with porticoes.

Power rested with those who had connections to the proper (that is, American slave) families, the Baptist

Church, the Masons, and the True Whig Party. Aborigines were excluded. This Americo-Liberian elite, with the same family and institutional ties, still rules, in much the same way, with many of the same formalities. For example, the most faithful churchgoers in Africa belong to this elite, wearing stiff, heavy clothes on Sunday despite the hot sun. (This is not true of the tribal peoples, who, like others in Africa, accept Christianity mainly for its benefits, such as education, but do not follow all the rules slavishly.)

Firestone to the rescue

The independence of Liberia and the power of the Americo-Liberians were threatened in the early twentieth century, but American neocolonialism saved both. The threat came from the British government, which looked on Liberia as too farcical for sovereignty. After 1900, when the Liberians reneged on repayment of a loan from British bankers, the British took over Liberian customs and sent their Sierra Leone Frontier Force under British officers to the interior of Liberia to collect taxes. Liberia appealed for help from its first benefactor.

The United States sent financial managers, arms, and black American soldiers to command the Liberian army, but the U.S. Congress refused to appropriate funds for a loan. In 1926, however, Liberia did receive a sizable American loan, not from the U.S. government but from a private source, the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. Firestone authorized a loan of \$5 million, but Liberia drew only about half, using almost all of it to pay off past debts to foreign bankers. Even cut in half, the loan was a sizable one in those days. Liberia was unable to pay it back until 1952. As late as 1955, the total revenue of the Liberian government was only \$13 million a year.

The company made the loan in exchange for a ninety-nine-year lease on a million acres of Liberian land for rubber plantations. Firestone later became such a dominant factor in the Liberian economy and so great a source of public services such as roads and schools that cynics enjoyed joking for years that,

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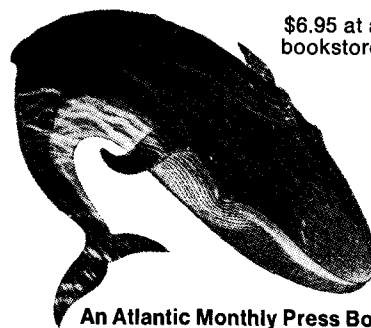
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LIBERIA

while most of Africa was colonized by Britain or France, Liberia was colonized by Firestone.

The importance of the Firestone loan became evident in the early 1930s. Citing the charges of near slavery in Liberia and reports that Liberian soldiers, under command of an American black, had massacred Kru tribesmen in Liberia, Britain demanded that the League of Nations take over Liberia as a mandate. That would have meant the end of Liberian independence. As a British or even an American colony, Liberia surely would have come to independence in the 1960s with power in the hands of representatives of the tribal masses, not a settler elite. It probably was only the presence of Firestone and the commitment of the U.S. government that enabled the Americo-Liberians to resist the pressures of the British and the League and keep Liberia independent.

Neglect

The tribalists finally won some attention after Tubman came to power in 1944. Although he had fought in the pacification wars as a young man and was carried by hammock on the shoulders of aborigines on his first presidential tours, Tubman instituted what he called the "Unification Policy" to give the tribalists some of the benefits that had been reserved in the past for the Americo-Liberians. Yet today, after the twenty-seven-year reign of Tubman and the two-year administration of President William R. Tolbert, Liberian society is still extremely stratified. The hallmark of Liberia, in fact, is the extreme neglect of the interior of the country, where most of the people live.

Educated tribalists blame this on the existence of an Americo-Liberian government that does not understand the needs of the people of the interior and therefore fails to respond to them. "If I went to President Tolbert, good as he is," one educated tribalist told me, "and explained to him the problems of my village, he would not understand. . . . The government doesn't even know my village exists."

A trip from Monrovia to Bong County in the interior of the country shows the problem graphically. While millions have been squandered in Monrovia for a resort-hotel-style Executive Mansion and a skyscraper for the True Whig Party, Gbarnga, the capital of Bong County, has no paved streets. It is a baking, somnolent town which features a single main street packed with Lebanese-owned shops.

Foreign educators in Gbarnga say that the school system is in chaos. Children in the lower primary grades are taught by ninth-graders. "Kids walk to secondary school six miles," said one foreigner. "Then the teacher isn't there. I don't blame the teachers for staying away. They don't get paid." Most secondary school students drop out before graduation. They are driven away by costs, their poor preparation in earlier grades, and the unlikelihood of moving on to a university or a good job with their weak secondary education.

Statistics for the country as a whole also show the neglect. Bong, Grand Gedeh, Loffa, and Nimba, the four interior counties with half the population of the country, have only eight of Liberia's thirty-four secondary schools. Montserrado County, in which Monrovia is located, has one hospital bed for every 250 people. Grand Gedeh County has one bed for every 5882 people.

Tribal people often feel that the only sure way to get attention in Monrovia is to pay homage to some influential Americo-Liberian. A chiefdom of the Pele people in Bong County believes that it has a school and road now only because the Pele allowed Tolbert, when he was Vice President, to buy a thousand acres of their land. In fact, land could become an issue in Liberia much as it has in settler colonies elsewhere in Africa. Although the government has no records, it is obvious that the "Honorables," as the elite of Americo-Liberian society is called, have acquired huge tracts of tribal land for themselves.

Yet there is little evidence of overt friction between the Americo-Liberians and the tribal people. Tribal people wait hours in the hot sun for a chance of a glimpse of their Americo-Liberian President. As the

educated tribalist put it, "Even if we had a free election right now and I was running against Tolbert, the tribal people wouldn't vote for me. They expect Liberia to be run by someone like Tolbert."

Since Tolbert became President in 1971, Liberia has had an unusual flurry of activity at the top and a more unusual air of change. Tolbert himself seems an unlikely agent of change. Now fifty-nine, he worked for two decades in obscurity, the diffident Vice President to old man Tubman, who, with his political shrewdness, manipulation of spoils, and security police, ruled Liberia with flair and firmness from 1944 to 1971.

"Higher heights"

Few Liberians represent the Establishment more than Tolbert. He is Grand Master Emeritus of the Masons of Liberia, former president of the World Baptist Alliance, and the son of an American black who emigrated from South Carolina in 1880 and became chairman of the True Whig Party. Even when he cries out for change, the President does so in archaic rhetoric. His slogan, for example, is, "Total involvement in our sustained upward thrust for higher heights."

But, if only to escape the shadow of Tubman, Tolbert has been trying to shake up Liberia. Some of his innovations are showmanship. He makes surprise visits to ministries at 8:00 A.M. to catch civil servants late for work. After returning from the Organization of African Unity summit meeting in Rabat this year, he publicly returned \$7000 of his unspent expense allowance. He sold Tubman's luxury yacht, which had cost the government a quarter of a million dollars a year to run. And he has made speeches in the Pele language to persuade tribalists that, although descended from an American black, he understands their problems.

Beyond the showmanship, however, there is a good deal of substance. Tolbert has dismantled Tubman's old security apparatus and encouraged some expression of conflicting views. He released Henry Fahnbulleh, a well-known tribal man who had been jailed under Tubman on trumped-up charges of

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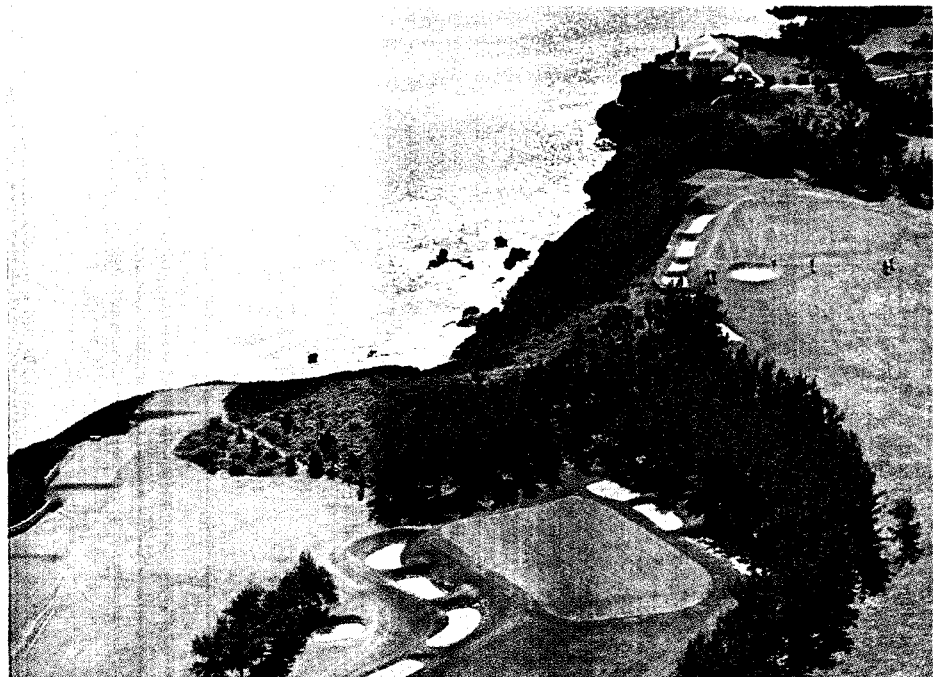
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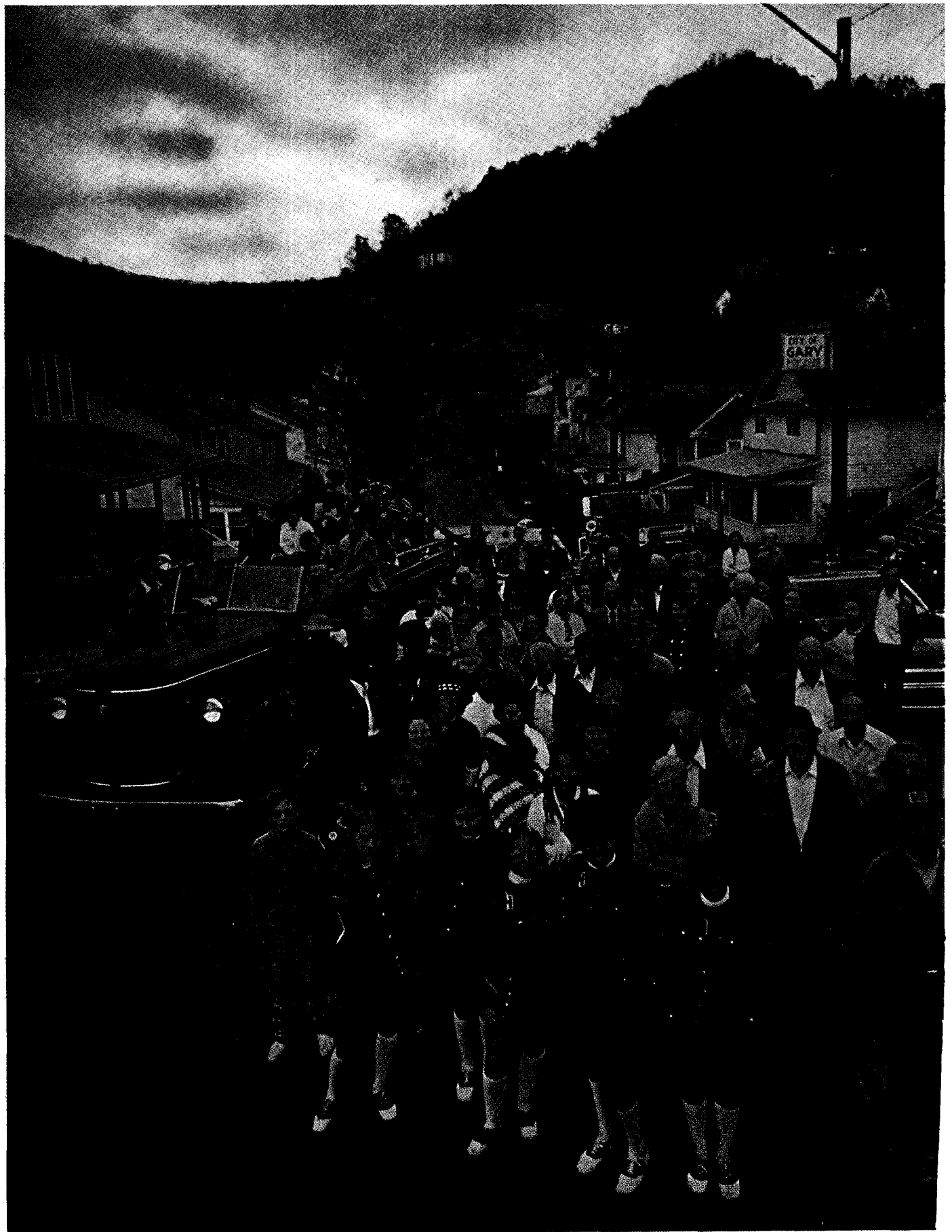
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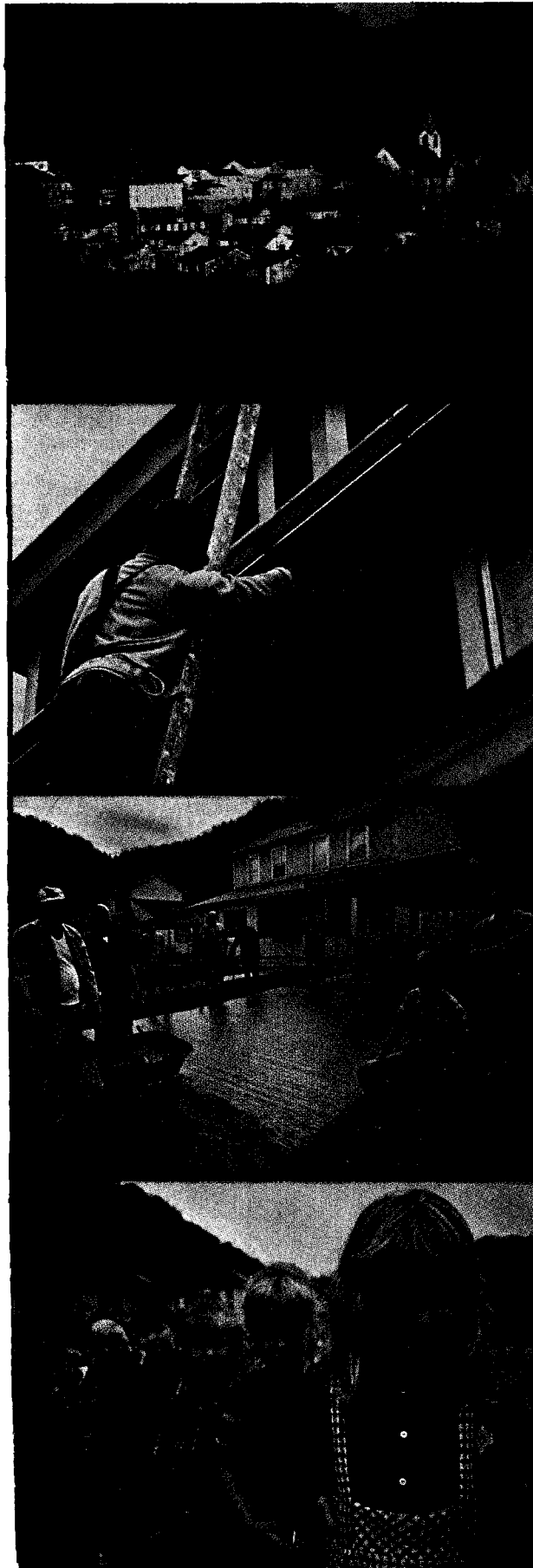
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leading a conspiracy to destroy the Americo-Liberian class. Liberian journalists like to tell visitors that, in the old days, Liberians at a bar would halt their conversation whenever a security man walked in. Now they stop talking when a journalist comes in. The story exaggerates the power of the press in Liberia. But recently the newspapers have been publishing some unprecedented criticism of government officials and policies.

Perhaps most significantly, the men under Tolbert, including his brother, Minister of Finance Stephen Tolbert, seem intent on infusing the bureaucracy with efficiency and rational planning and on ridding the government of officials who cannot or will not do their jobs. At the least, there is a good deal of activity now, even in the interior.

But none of President Tolbert's changes weaken the hierarchy of Liberia. In choosing a Vice President in 1972, the True Whig Party under Tolbert did not fool with any new-fangled open democratic procedures. Instead, the party met in closed caucus and picked Senator James E. Green, who, like Tolbert, like Tubman, like all the other historical leaders of Liberia, is pure Americo-Liberian.

There is a more profound and fundamental agent of change in Liberia than Tolbert. It is the flexibility of the ruling class. Unlike most white ruling minorities in Africa, the Americo-Liberians have a system of drawing tribal people into their culture.

There is some intermarriage, but more importantly, Americo-Liberians accept the illegitimate children of tribal mistresses as their own, and, in what is known as the ward system, adopt tribal orphans and bring them up as members of the family. Skin color accounts for the ease with which this happens. As a result, there are many Honorables now who have at least some tribal blood, though culturally they belong to the Americo-Liberian class.

In fact, much like the new interest in the African past on the part of blacks in America, there is a tendency now for Americo-Liberians to

boast about their tribal background. It has become fashionable in the elite schools of Monrovia, for example, for students to use an African name rather than a Christian name. Some politicians and important civil servants, perhaps sensing what the future holds, have decided to do the same.

Harry A. Greaves, the superintendent (or appointed administrator) of Bong County, is a good example of how confusing it sometimes is these days to differentiate an Americo-Liberian from a tribal man. The Greaves family is one of the most honorable of the Honorables of the coastal town of Buchanan. Greaves himself is so much a part of the Americo-Liberian Establishment that he once served as chairman of the True Whig Party in Nimba County.

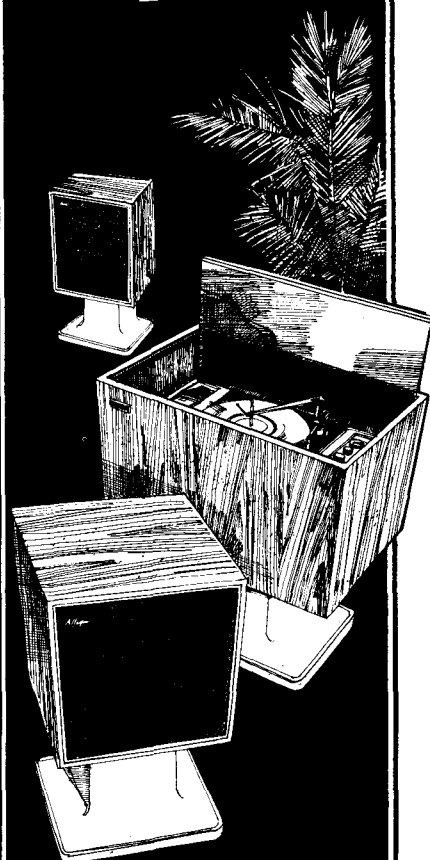
Yet Greaves is actually a ward taken into the Greaves family after his tribal father died. His tribal name is Zachpah. Though culturally an Americo-Liberian, Greaves likes to describe himself these days as a tribal man trying to encourage economic development in the Bong County of his tribal peoples. "Out of respect to the Honorable Mr. Greaves [his adopted father]," he says, "I will always keep his name. But I have insisted that all relatives that I am now putting through school will use the name Zachpah."

Greaves exemplifies how the social structure of Liberia is slowly changing from a caste system to a class system. Wealth and education can overcome lowly birth. A tribal man is no longer rigidly excluded from the elite because his forefathers were not slaves.

The flexibility of the Americo-Liberians gives Liberia a chance for orderly change. In the nineteenth century, power passed in Liberia, though not without violence, from the mulatto ex-slaves to the black ex-slaves. The system seems geared now to allow power to pass first to the Americo-Liberians with some tribal blood, then to the tribalists, such as Greaves, who have been assimilated into Americo-Liberian culture, and finally to the real tribal people. The selection of Green as Vice President shows that the pure Americo-Liberians are resisting change. But it is inevitable.

—STANLEY MEISLER

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I'll Never Go There
Anymore

by L. E. Sissman

When I was a small boy going on a big man, I used to admire people—in literature, anyway; I'm not sure I ever met any in life—who refused to suffer fools gladly, or at all. Likewise, I stood in awe of the motto ascribed to Evelyn Waugh: "Never apologize, never explain." Though I've gone through most of my life so far suffering fools, apologizing, and explaining, I've never ceased to envy those slightly supernatural beings who could hew to such tenets.

But now that I've turned forty-five, I think I've discovered their secret: age. If age is enfeebling (and it is), it's also liberating in a curiously parallel way. Age frees you to condemn, to cut, to ignore, precisely because it deprives you of tolerance, stamina, bonhomie. At forty-five, one is no longer constrained to stand for hours at a party in the company of a notorious gasbag; even if one's reserves of reverence were unimpaired, one's leg muscles would be unequal to the task. And a rising flush of irritation over the imposition will generally assure a satisfactorily rude termination of the interview.

Now I see how all the stylish terrors and curmudgeons, from Dr. Johnson to Edmund Wilson, did it: they simply let their infirmities take the upper hand. No blooming, bouncy young man, however artful, could ever equal the fatal acerbity of their wit and malice, for the simple reason that no young man hurts as much as an older one. Now, I'm hardly decrebid (as I think the great dialect humorist Richard Bissell once had one of his

Iowan characters say), but I do have enough aches, agues, scars, and wound stripes to let them take command in social situations when, formerly, I would have suffered in pasted-on smiling silence, or with placatingly murmured "um"s. So, as a set of easy-to-observe resolutions for this and future declining years, I have decided to adopt the following code of curmudgeonly behavior. I've been to the place where sympathetic, ingratiating young men subject themselves to all kinds of needless trials and torments in the name of politesse; having served too long an apprenticeship, I'll never go there anymore.

First of all, I'll never again walk across the street (literally or figuratively) to meet some literary Great Man. When I've walked that way in the past, I've invariably found that (1) however gracious and human the G.M. might be, we had nothing whatever to say to each other, or (2) the G.M., undoubtedly exercising his own curmudgeonly prerogatives, refused to recognize my (or anybody else's) existence. An extreme example: not long ago, a famous literary man attended one of my poetry readings. At a small party afterward, he had not one word to say about the reading; according to a mutual friend, he never comments on other people's work. Well, bully for him; but, equally, bully for me for not sitting at the feet of his ilk in future.

Then there's the Young Suppliant, who stands in somewhat the same relation to me as the one in which I used to stand to the Great Man. He's always sending me an unsolicited sample of his work (sometimes the sample is so generous as to constitute a lifetime supply) or calling to see if I can spare him "just an hour or two" or asking me to send his unpublished works to some editor I know. Well, from now on, with certain unavoidable exceptions fomented by friendship, the answer is going to be No. And, if the Y.S. doesn't bother to include a stamped, self-addressed return envelope with his samples, the answer is going to be Nil. There.

Another class of parasite who never will be missed by me in future is the representative of some church, school, or good cause who wants to wangle a free poetry read-

ing. Since poets are hardly supported by the state—or by any of the aforementioned institutions—it is not incumbent on the poet to support them by giving away what he normally sells. I'll take increasing pleasure in saying No to this bunch, as I will to their relatives, the chintzy school and college English teachers who exploit a poet by asking him to give a reading, attend a vapid party, and address six English classes for his usual fee. Ditto the *conférenciers* who think I'll be so smitten with a couple of big names that I'll attend their boring, pointless, three-day workshop/gabfest/seminars for next to nothing.

Now that I'm warming to my work, I should say that the scope for my new crustiness is by no means wholly literary. There are all sorts of people I've been dying to cut all my life, and now, by God, I will. At parties (I've already tried this, and it works) I'm going to drift slowly but resolutely away from bores of all ages and sexes, leaving them, preferably, in mid-sentence, without a word of explanation. In stores I'm going to ask for service in no uncertain terms. In restaurants—see my last column for the sad results of silence—I'm going to put aside my diffidence and raise some hell when the food is cold or bad or I'm made to wait unconscionably. And when a store really fouls up my order, I'm going to call the president at once (this, too, I've already tried; it, too, works fine).

In fact, now I think of it, it's not just people that I want to cut out of my life. There are lots of *things* that I've been a fall guy for, whether because they were fashionable and "in" or because I've just never thought them through enough to realize that I don't need them. Booze, for one. It used to be thought fashionable to drink, sometimes to excess, and maybe it still is in certain circles. While I haven't driven home from a party on the wrong side of the road or vomited all over somebody else's bathroom for at least fifteen years (well, I can think of one later incident), how many times have I had a drink or two or three more than I really wanted, just because it was hard to say No? And cigarettes. I quit for three years once, but naturally went back. What's natural about that? I wasn't

born a smoker, and I didn't smoke for my first fifteen years on earth. So to hell with cigarettes. And to hell with boozy lunches. (I'll keep you posted on my progress in both areas. If I backslide, you'll hear it first from me.)

And to hell with wasting time. I hereby solemnly swear to can, avoid, and eschew all those time-burning occasions that wanting to seem a good fellow has led me into in the past. No more stultifying lunches-cum-speeches, hearing some benighted, outdated past master extolling his pastmastery. No more noisy, kitschy gallery openings, with their poison sherry and poisonous people. No more big fund-raising galas of any description; to give both money and one's presence seems to me double jeopardy. No more gossip cocktail parties full of people so far in they're out, or at least as few as I can possibly manage.

No more creaky, mildewed Broadway plays. No more overblown memoirs by prominent nobodies. No more top-rated comedy sensations on TV—the plastic kind that come apart in your head after the first half hour.

No more. No more fudging around with my own imprimatur. Either it has some modest value, or it doesn't. So no reviews—never, ever again—of my friends' books. No endorsements or recommendations of books or people I can't wholeheartedly recommend. No going along with a clique because it's for a buddy. And no attacking the cult object of another clique on anything but objective grounds (and I know that's a tall order).

And, to replace those No's and put all that time to gainful use, what then? Well, work. What else? All kinds of work that cries out to be done. Answering my mail, to take a humble instance (I'm a pretty reliable correspondent, but apologies herewith to kind readers who have written and had to wait for answers). Reading enough books to spot the worthwhile ones and then finding time to call them to public attention. Thinking about writing this column and writing it better and more interestingly. Thinking about writing verse and writing it to the limit of my ability. Thinking about other kinds of writ-



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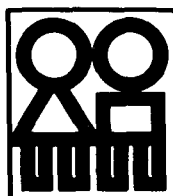
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BYSTANDER

ing I've wanted to do and doing them.

And, more than all that, enjoying life. My generation got itself herded, or maybe stampeded, in the general direction of the future, without much time for reflection. Its values, like its clothes, were more or less foisted on it by forefathers; who knew best. But now many of us have seen our goal close up and perceived it to be a windmill—a beat-up old simulacrum of inflated self that doesn't grind any more grain and isn't even worth a lance. So we are now free. Free to turn away from the old minuet of manners and respect and precedence, free to give less of a damn about our teeth, our visage, our image, the state of our armor (decrebid). Free to let values readjust themselves on those big old ponderous scales. Free, specifically, to look down at the ground again after forty years of looking straight ahead—or up, excelsior!—and renew our acquaintance with our own feet, those flat, ignoble paddles that have carried us so far, and with the insignificant, hitherto dismissible violets in the turf around them. (There is something touching, maybe heart-breaking, about the idea of man not as master but as part of a landscape; one of the most affecting photographs I've ever taken shows a small section of spring meadow, about two feet by three, with some healthy, springing grass, three blooms of bluets, and, in the middle, a battered, red-and-blue-striped pint thermos bottle, put out to pasture and taking its ease long after some farmer's nooning.)

I expect that what I'm saying is that I've suddenly, with a touch of the shock of recognition and a demiflourish of one trumpet, found myself back where I started from in relation to the real world, regarding its things and creatures with at least an imitation of my earliest wonder. I've been more than a casual looker at meadows, voles, and sunsets for some years now, and I've become increasingly aware of the real value of my friends, my wife, my home, but all of it, till now, has been in glimpses and glances snatched from other concerns, like intercut bits in

a movie. I've always been tearing myself away from some ongoing concern—success, money, the next boring hurdle to clear—to notice momentarily, and then forget, the things that give my life whatever meaning it may have.

Now that is finally, blessedly changing, for reasons I'm not fully aware of, though I suspect that age, with its intimations of mortality, may have helped most to bring me back to my senses, as I've written here before this. The transformation—phony prince into earthly frog—is slow and unsure, but every month I seem to become a little better able to shake off my comet's tail of inconsequentialities, gathered over the years—meaningless obligations, courteous artificialities, trivial fears—and stand up on my own, for once, and look down at those lonely, ugly feet and the springing turf around them.

That being so, you will find a wedge of once treasured values and illusions filling the trash barrel in the back of my car on the way to the dump. In their place I hope you will also find one new-minted curmudgeon, older, sadder, slightly wiser, and with, on the whole, a hell of a lot better idea of what to do with the rest of his life than he ever had before.

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THE MAIL

McGOVERN CAMP

SIR: "Victory," as John F. Kennedy said, "has a thousand fathers; but defeat is an orphan." The McGovern defeat, judging from Jane O'Reilly's fairly typical analysis of our shortcomings ("The McGovern Camp Disbands," January *Atlantic*), seems to be not only an orphan but a bastard.

The description of Gordon Weil as an "officious intermeddler," which Ms. O'Reilly attributes to me, lacks one word. I described him as an "official officious intermeddler," which is vastly different. The officious intermeddler, in law, is the well-intentioned Good Samaritan who tries to fix things he thinks are wrong without having been asked to do so. (He sets the leg of an accident victim rather than wait for help, or he audits a company's books rather than report a possible embezzlement.)

The point I was trying to make about Mr. Weil was that that was his assignment—to look into problems and try to solve them without referring to a higher authority for each task. I thought, on balance, that he did it well. And that judgment of him by me certainly does not come through the way Ms. O'Reilly wrote it.

FRANK MANKIEWICZ
Westmoreland Hills, Md.

SIR: As a member of the Los Angeles County Democratic Central Committee, the chief body of the Democratic Party in Los Angeles County, I was most interested in Jane O'Reilly's "The McGovern Camp Disbands."

Let me explain first that contrary to a view voiced by McGovern

workers in Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Democratic Central Committee is not "a bunch of peasants." Nor is it a group of old-time party hacks per se. Instead, the members are elected by the voters in the popular primary at the same time that the congressional and other nominees are chosen. Each state assembly district elects by popular ballot members of this committee. I was chosen by the voters to represent the 49th Assembly District.

As a member of the County Central Committee, I think I was in a good position to observe the arrogance, and self-seeking and outright willful incompetence, of the McGovern staff in the last election. The one fault, if it is a fault, that I would find with Miss O'Reilly's article is that it was perhaps too gentle.

For example, I went to a meeting at McGovern's main office in Los Angeles where the whole evening was spent "assuring" campaign workers that "McGovern isn't anti-Semitic"—as if the question had ever been raised!

Another example: a teacher I know in Cucamonga was told that his volunteer services weren't wanted because McGovern had already written Cucamonga off to Nixon.

Staff assistants to a member of the California State Assembly were told that an assemblyman was "too petty" to bother with having his help.

A minister in the San Fernando Valley, after speaking to groups for McGovern, received a letter saying McGovern didn't want his help.

I know of a newspaper reporter who offered to help McGovern full-

time at no salary. Senator McGovern referred him to Southern California press secretary Fred Epstein. The man wrote Epstein a dozen letters, telephoned six times, and attempted to visit Epstein at the Los Angeles office about three times.

His letters were never answered, his telephone calls never returned, and his visits never acknowledged. The chap finally gave up and became an alternate for John Lindsay as a member of the California delegation to the Democratic National Convention.

WILLIAM WINGFIELD
Los Angeles, Calif.

PIG KILLING

SIR: I enjoyed "A Day No Pigs Would Die" (December, 1972, *Atlantic*), but there appears to be an error in the story.

A hog is scalded and scraped before it is gutted. Otherwise the exposed meat and fat would be cooked by the boiling water. Also, it would be difficult to prevent the hair and scurf from getting on the meat.

This error doesn't change the thrust of the story, but it spoils the verisimilitude.

PHILIP FROHLICH
Baltimore, Md.

Robert Newton Peck replies:

Right, Mr. Frohlich, scald first, then gut. But in "A Day No Pigs Would Die," the father was age sixty, helped only by a boy. December weight made it necessary to pre-gut.

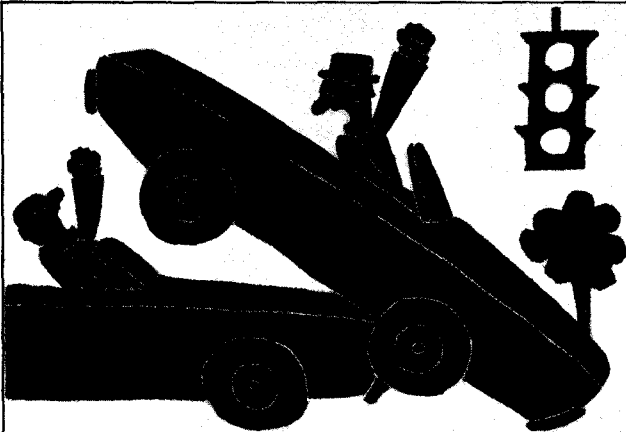
Pork is dunked in 150-degree water. Your letter said boiling. Wrong, Mr. Frohlich.

**Will everyone
who thinks
auto insurance
costs too much
please stand up?**

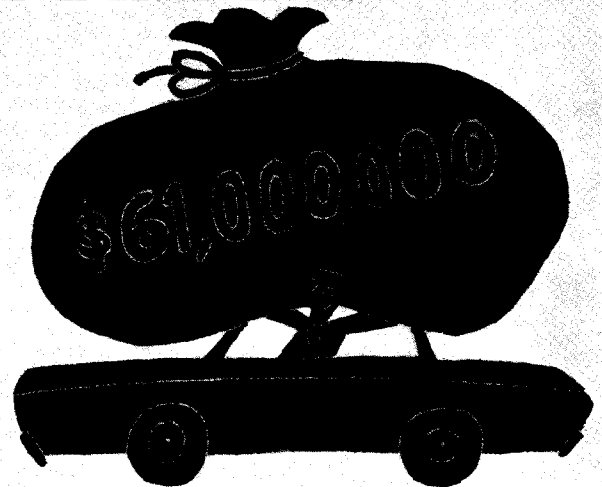


America needs action on No-Fault

Now's your chance to be heard. State legislatures are convening and they're the ones who decide the kind of auto insurance you live with. Many have already scheduled discussions of No-Fault laws.



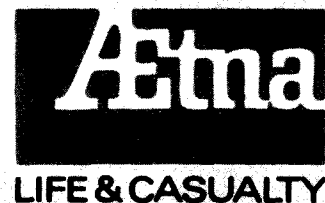
What's No-Fault? Simple. Accident settlements are based on *loss* instead of *blame*. Your insurance company pays your actual medical costs, lost wages and property damage. The other driver's company pays his. It's fast and fair. Lawsuits to decide fault are eliminated. So money is saved.



It works, too. For example, a No-Fault law became effective in Massachusetts in 1971. The first year alone saved car owners more than \$61,000,000 on the cost of their auto insurance.



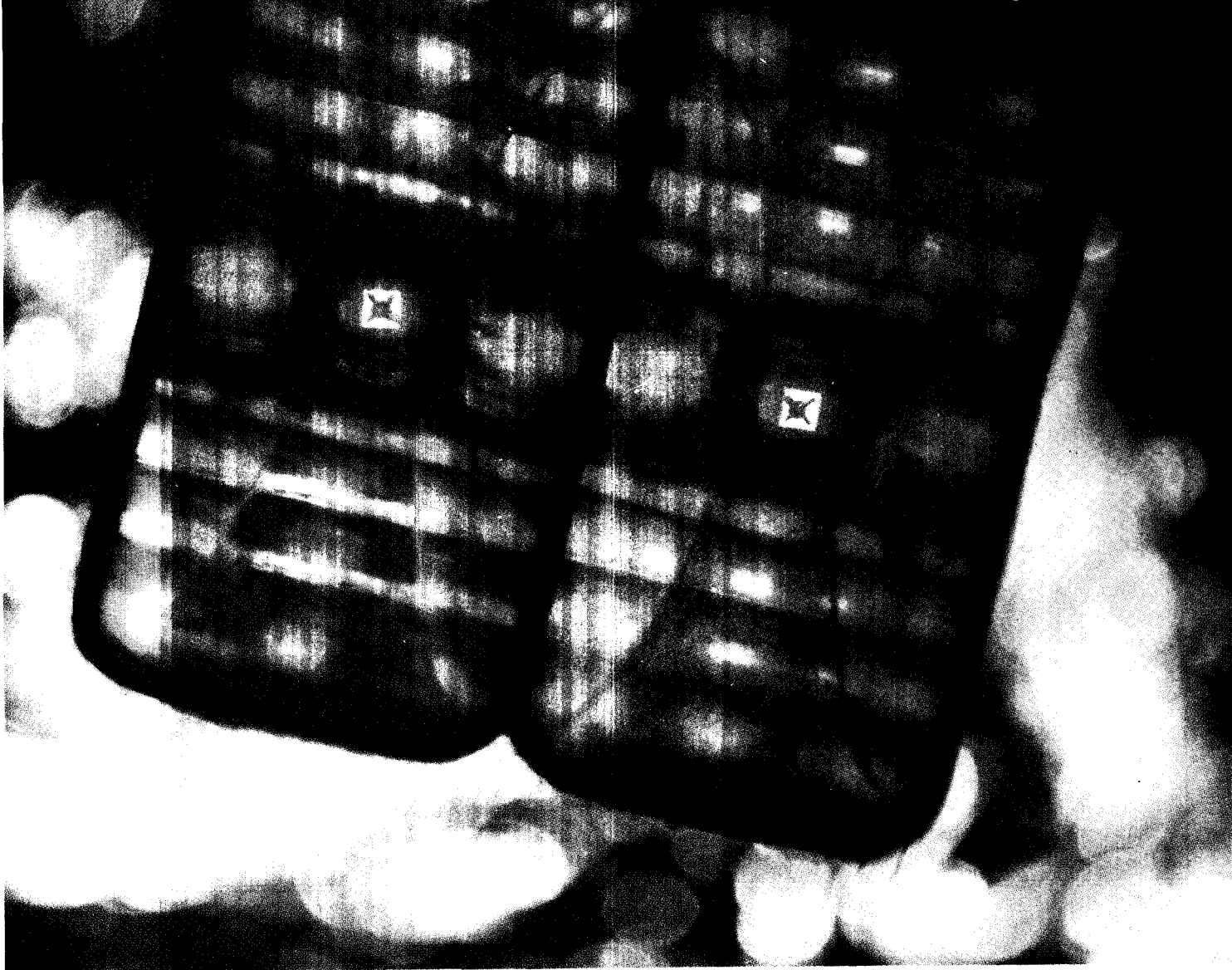
You'd expect an idea this good would spread fast, but only a few states have done anything about it. Where the law is strong and eliminates most lawsuits, insurance costs have come down. When the law doesn't reduce lawsuits, little is saved. Most states have not acted at all.



So now's the time to ask for action in your state. You can urge a strong law that reduces insurance costs and returns more of your premium dollar in benefits to you. And when that kind of law is proposed, you'll find Aetna supporting it every way we can.

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ADVICE AND CONSENT

SIR: In "Laud" (January *Atlantic*), David Black describes the World Socialist Party as "... a pure Marxist conspiracy so innocent that they were not banned from agitating on Boston Common during World War II."

Not so. There *is* a World Socialist Party, with headquarters in Boston. Furthermore, we certainly did "agitate" on Boston Common for many years prior to, during, and subsequent to World War II. We were, in fact, the only avowedly socialist political party in the United States with all-out opposition to all belligerents in World War II, a statement we can document.

David Black does us an injustice by labeling us a "conspiracy." We have always proclaimed our aim: complete abolition of the wages, prices, profits system and the immediate establishment of world socialism—and this object has always been emblazoned on all of our official literature, including our journal *The Western Socialist*. Our position is based upon political action and we advocate as the means to our end the ballot and all other democratic procedures. We have always rejected the advocacy of violence or of any action based upon minority, "vanguard" organization.

Furthermore, we were not included on the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations during and following World War II, not because of any supposed "innocence" on our part, but because we could not possibly be identified as friendly to any foreign power.

There was, nevertheless, an attempt made to ban us and other groups from free speech on Boston Common during World War II. The attempt fizzled and resulted in a Massachusetts Supreme Court decision that no authority had the right to issue permits to speak on the Common, simply because such right existed (and still exists) at all times providing there is no incitement to riot.

HARRY MORRISON
National Secretary
World Socialist Party
Boston, Mass.

SIR: It's no business of a writer to discuss a reviewer's review (The

Peripatetic Reviewer, January *Atlantic*), I feel, but when a question is asked—och, there's the difference.

Reviewing my book *The Camerons*, Edward Weeks wonders how the librarian Selkirk could drink all that Scotch on his pittance. Scotch in those days was three pennies a pint, about the same price as the equivalent amount of grain to make a loaf of bread. When times were hard, many masters paid their help in whiskey, which didn't endear them to the hungry at home. At the same time in America you could get roaring drunk for ten cents.

As for the reading. One thing I played down was the peculiar intensity or lust for reading traditional among Scottish miners and others of the working class. Little school, much literacy, a point that has been endlessly noted by observers of the Scottish scene. Tallulah, Mr. Weeks writes, "was sharply intelligent, could learn a play in two days. . . ." The Camerons were meant to be exceptional, and most of them were. Only one of my father's brothers went beyond the sixth grade (miners all), but no one

in later years ever would have known it. They were obsessed with bettering themselves through books and debate (every mining town had a debating society)—the types of John L. Lewis or Nye Bevan were no mistakes—and Andrew Carnegie touched the national nerve when he gave away his money in the form of books and libraries.

ROBERT CRICHTON
New York City

SIR: Dan Wakefield wrote a story entitled "A Full Moon in Sagittarius," which you printed in your January issue. Wakefield sets the story—and the full moon of the title—around the time of the winter solstice.

The full moon in Sagittarius, however, cannot happen any time remotely close to winter solstice. When the moon is full in Sagittarius, the moon lies opposite the sun in Gemini. And that has to be in May or June.

In 1973, the full moon in Sagittarius will occur on June 15. About a week before *summer* solstice.

WILBUR WOOD
Roundup, Mont.

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ROME

Gigli - Via Veneto

Pieroni - Via Veneto

Nino - Piazza Esedra (Corner of
Via Nazionale)

Liboli - Piazza dei Cinquecento

Gramsci - Via Gramsci

Fao - Via Aventino

Liva - Piazza di Spagna

Piazza Navona

And six newsstands at Fiumicino Airport

SIR: After reading L. E. Sissman's "What I Want For Christmas" in the December *Atlantic*, I thought, "He'll NEVER top this." Along came the January *Atlantic* and "Auld Acquaintance."

The beauty and mystery of true friendship have never been put into words as well.

LOIS M. SIZOO
Danville, Calif.

SIR: Martin Nolan's piece on "The Re-Selling of the President" (November *Atlantic*) is entertaining, but two misconceptions about public relations persist throughout Mr. Nolan's essay.

His piece seems to rest on the notion that there is a difference between "substance" and "public relations." The fact is, of course, that all good public relations begins with performance or, as Mr. Nolan puts it, with substance. Since the very beginnings of modern public relations, the basic principle on which it rests has been that without real substance behind them, public relations efforts will always fail.

The second of Mr. Nolan's misconceptions is that the persons in the Nixon Administration he accuses of substituting public relations for substance are public relations men. They are not. They are all, like Mr. Nolan himself, journalists, or, in the case of Mr. Haldeman, advertising men. With the possible exception of Gerald Warren, not one is or ever has been an accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America.

Perhaps Mr. Nolan is right in a sense. Perhaps amateurishly, the President's advisers do believe that public relations can be substituted for substance. However, history will likely show that the Nixon Administration has produced more of substance than either of the two administrations that preceded it.

WARD B. STEVENSON
Past Chairman
Public Relations Council of America
Los Angeles, Calif.

The Atlantic welcomes communications from readers, but can rarely accommodate letters in excess of 500 words. Light editing, for style and economy, is the rule rather than the exception, and we assume that any letter, unless stipulated, is free for publication in our letters column.

Contributors

HENRY OWEN was chairman of the State Department's Policy Planning Council from 1966 to 1969.

STANLEY MEISLER is African correspondent for the Los Angeles *Times*.

GODFREY HODGSON, former American correspondent for the London *Observer* and the London *Sunday Times* and co-author of *An American Melodrama: The Presidential Campaign of 1968*, is at work on a new book about U.S. politics and society.

BERNARD MALAMUD's most recent novel is *Tenants*; his short-story collections include *The Magic Barrel*.

STUART HEMSLEY, a diplomat and a poet, lives in Ottawa.

DAVID ROGERS is a graduate student at Harvard (see page 4).

GAVIN LAMBERT is the author of *Inside Daisy Clover* and *On Cukor*. A longer version of his account of the making of *Gone With the Wind* will appear later this year.

WASSILY LEONTIEF, professor of economics at Harvard and a former president of the American Economic Association, was recently in China.

SHIRLEY FAESSLER is at work on a novel.

RICHARD W. MURPHY really and truly lives in Paris.

MELVIN MADDOCKS' essay "Brave New Marriage" appeared in the September, 1972, *Atlantic*.

X. J. KENNEDY is professor of English at Tufts University and author of *Growing Into Love*, a poetry collection.

JAMES MERRILL was recently awarded the Bollingen Prize in Poetry.

L. E. SISSMAN, FERNANDO KRAHN, EDWARD WEEKS, and PHOEBE ADAMS appear regularly in these pages.

DO SCHOOLS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

by Godfrey Hodgson

Since the days of Thomas Jefferson, we have believed that education is a means of achieving equality in our society. But in the last few years, social science has brought that assumption into question. The battle now rages; controversy surrounds the participants—Jencks, Moynihan, Coleman, Pettigrew, Jensen, Herrnstein, Armor; and where it all will end matters not just to the experts, but to all of us.

The day Daniel Patrick Moynihan arrived at Harvard in the spring of 1966, he met some of his new colleagues at the Faculty Club in Cambridge. One of those present that evening was Professor Seymour Martin Lipset of the Harvard government department. "Hello, Pat," said Lipset, "guess what Coleman's found?"

"Coleman" was James S. Coleman, professor of social relations at Johns Hopkins, who had been charged by the Johnson Administration with conducting an extensive survey of "the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities" by reason of race, religion, or national origin. And what the Coleman survey had found, as Lipset paraphrased its voluminous findings, could hardly have come as more of a surprise. He had found, as Lipset told Moynihan excitedly, that "schools make no difference; families make the difference."

Some six years later, Moynihan arrived a few minutes late for lunch with a friend at the same club, in a mood of jubilant intellectual pugnacity unusual even for him. Both the delay and the mood, he explained, resulted from a demonstration he had run into on his way across Harvard Yard from a class. Some students were handing out leaflets. It was their content which had produced Moynihan's mood of sardonic amusement. "Christopher Jencks," they said, "is a tool of reactionary American imperialist capitalism."

Christopher Jencks a tool of capitalism? In the dozen years since he graduated from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he is now an associate professor, Sandy Jencks (as he is called) had moved perceptibly from the liberal toward the radical position. While an editor of *The New Republic* he began working with the distinctly New Left Institute for Policy Studies in Washington. He got into the neighborhood community control thing, and he helped to found the Cambridge Institute, which looks for "alternative visions of the American future": decidedly one of the rising intellectual reputations on the American left. Now he has written a book, *Inequality*, in association with other researchers, working in large part from the same Coleman report data which, in Lipset's words, showed that "schools make no difference."

Pat Moynihan had started on the left, too. Trained as an orthodox social scientist, he grew up among liberals, and then discovered a most unorthodox flair for polemical prose and persuasive speech. After a political apprenticeship working for Governor Averell Harriman of New

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York, he took office as a liberal intellectual in good standing as an Assistant Secretary of Labor in the Kennedy Administration, and stayed on for a period under Johnson.

For some years now, however, he could hardly have been called a man of the left. His intellectual voyage can be dated from the publication of his report on the Negro family in 1965. Many liberals and blacks reacted with outrage to his dour assessment of the likelihood that orthodox liberal policies could eliminate the problems of the black under-class. He was outraged in turn by what he perceived as the liberals' dishonest and anti-intellectual refusal to follow where social science led. And by the time he returned to Washington in 1969 to serve Richard Nixon as a Cabinet-rank Counselor, he could no longer be called a man of the left at all. In recent years he has in fact established himself as the shrewdest strategist and most flamboyant impresario of an intellectual movement which can perhaps be called neo-conservative—though Moynihan maintains that it is radical. Whatever the label, it is almost contemptuously skeptical of the New Left and of conventional liberal shibboleths alike.

Moynihan's amusement at seeing his colleague Jencks leaflet in Harvard Yard was not due to malice or *Schadenfreude*. On the contrary, it seemed to him to confirm that the argument between him and his friends and the left was over: that he had won. "Jencks ends up," he told me, "where Richard Nixon was in 1969."

Christopher Jencks does not see it that way. In fact, it is a strange kind of argument: one in which the participants largely agree about the Coleman survey, greatly as it surprised them when they first grasped it, but disagree, sometimes vehemently, on what it implies. The fight calls into question certain propositions which, until the Coleman report, few social scientists and few liberals dreamed of doubting: principally, that one of the main causes of inequality in American life has been inequality in education; and that education could be used as a tool to reduce inequality in society. The crucial role which education has been assigned in the United States is under heavy challenge. Is there now to be a retreat from the traditional faith in education as a tool of social change in America?

Since the days of Horace Mann and John Dewey—indeed since the days of Thomas Jefferson, that child of the Enlightenment—education has occupied a special place in the optimistic vision of American progressives, and of many American conservatives, for that matter. As the historian David Potter pointed out in *People of Plenty*, the American left, encouraged by the opportunities of an unexhausted continent and by the experience of economic success, has always differed

sharply from the European left in that it has generally assumed that social problems could be resolved out of incremental growth: that is, that the life of the have-nots could be made tolerable without taking anything from the haves. Education has always seemed one of the most acceptable ways of using the national wealth to provide opportunity for the poor without offending the comfortable. As a tool of reform, education had the advantage that it appealed to the ideology of conservatives, to that ethic of self-improvement which stretches back down the American tradition through Horatio Alger and McGuffey's *Readers* to Benjamin Franklin himself. This was particularly true in the age of the Great Migration. The public school systems of New York and other cities with large immigrant populations really did provide a measure of equality of opportunity to the immigrant poor. By the time the New Deal coalition was formed (and educators of one sort and another were to be a significant part of that coalition), these assumptions about education were deeply rooted. And they were powerfully reinforced, and virtually certified with the authority of social science, by the Supreme Court's 1954 desegregation decision in *Brown v. The School Board of Topeka*. *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the 1896 Supreme Court decision by which statutory and customary segregation in the South were reconciled with the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, was not a school case. (As it happens, it concerned segregation on a Lake Pontchartrain ferry steamer.) But when, in the late 1930s and the 1940s, the NAACP, its lawyers, and its allies began to go to court to lay siege to segregation, they deliberately, and wisely, chose education as the field of attack. This was not accidental; they well knew that education was so firmly associated with equality in the public mind that it would be an easier point of attack than, say, public accommodations or housing. Not coincidentally, they worked their way up to the main citadel of the 1954 *Brown* decision by way of a series of law school cases: lawyers would find it hard to deny that segregation in law school was irrelevant to success in professional life.

In *Brown*, the NAACP's lawyers deployed social science evidence in support of their contention that segregated education was inherently unequal, citing especially work done by psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark with black children and black and white dolls. The Clarks' conclusions were that segregation inflicts psychological harm.

The historical accident of the circumstances in which school segregation came to be overthrown by the Supreme Court contributed to the currency of what turned out to be a shaky assumption. The great majority of American liberals, and this included large numbers of judges, Democratic politicians, and educators, came to suppose that there was incontrovertible evidence in the findings of so-

cial science to prove not just that segregated education was unequal but that if you wanted to achieve equality, education could do it for you. Or, to put the same point in a slightly different way, the prominence given to footnote 11 in the *Brown* judgment, which listed social science research showing that education could not be both separate and equal, had the effect of partially obscuring the real grounds for overthrowing segregation, which were constitutional, political, and moral.

Then a contemporary development put education right at the center of the political stage. President Johnson's "Great Society" was to be achieved without alienating the power structure and, above all, the Congress. Education was an important part of the Great Society strategy from the start, but as other approaches to reducing poverty and racial inequality, notably "community action," ran into political opposition, they fell apart, and so the proportional emphasis on educational programs in the Great Society scheme grew. In the end, the Johnson Administration, heavily committed to reducing inequality, was almost equally committed to education as one of the principal ways to do it.

Each of the events and historical developments sketched here increased the shock effect of the Coleman report—once its conclusions were understood. A handful of social scientists had indeed hinted, before Coleman, that the effect of schools on equality of opportunity might have been exaggerated. But such work had simply made no dent in the almost universal assumption to the contrary.

James Coleman himself has confessed he does not know exactly why Congress, in section 402 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ordered the Commissioner of Education to conduct a survey "concerning the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities for individuals by reason of race, color, religion or national origin." The most likely reason is that Congress thought it was setting out to document the obvious in order to arm the Administration with a public relations bludgeon to overcome opposition. Certainly James Coleman took it for granted that his survey would find gross differences in the quality of the schools that black and white children went to. "The study will show," he predicted in an interview more than halfway through the job, "the difference in the quality of schools that the average Negro child and the average white child are exposed to. You know yourself that the difference is going to be striking."

He was exactly wrong. Coleman was staggered—in the word of one of his associates—to find the *lack* of difference. When the results were in, from about 600,000 children and 60,000 teachers in roughly 4000 schools, when they had been collected and collated and computed, and sifted with regression analysis and all the other refinements of

statistical science, they were astonishing. A writer in *Science* called them "a spear pointed at the heart of the cherished American belief that equality of educational opportunity will increase the equality of educational achievement."

What did the figures say? Christopher Jencks later picked out four major points:

(1) Most black and white Americans attended different schools.

(2) Despite popular impressions to the contrary, the physical facilities, the formal curricula, and most

of the measurable characteristics of teachers in black and white schools were quite similar.

(3) Despite popular impressions to the contrary, measured differences in schools' physical facilities, formal curricula, and teacher characteristics had very little effect on either black or white students' performance on standardized tests.

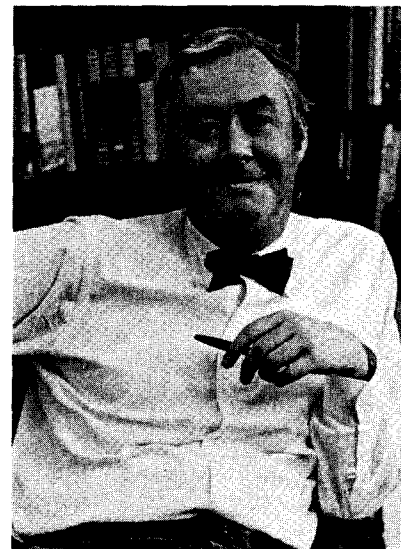
(4) The one school characteristic that showed a consistent relationship to test performance was the one characteristic to which poor black children were denied access: classmates from affluent homes.

Here is how James Coleman himself summed up the 737 pages of his report (not to mention the additional 548 pages of statistical explanation):

Children were tested at the beginning of grades 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12. Achievement of the average American Indian, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Negro (in this descending order)¹ was much lower than the average white or Oriental American, at all grade levels . . . the differences are large to begin with, and they are even larger at higher grades. Two points, then, are clear: (1) these minority children have a serious educational deficiency at the start of school, which is obviously not a result of school, and (2) they have an even more serious deficiency at the end of school, which is obviously in part a result of school.

Coleman added that the survey showed that most of the variation in student achievement lay within the same school, and very little of it was between schools. Family background—whatever that might mean—must, he concluded, account for far more of the variation in achievement than differences between schools. Moreover, such differences as *could* be attributed to the schools seemed to result more from the social environment

¹ Coleman oversimplified his own report slightly on this point: in the first grade blacks did better than Puerto Ricans, while in the twelfth grade Mexican Americans did better than American Indians.



Daniel Patrick Moynihan

(Jencks's "affluent classmates," and also teachers) than from the quality of the school itself.

This was the most crucial point. For if quality were measured, as it had tended to be measured by administrators and educational reformers alike, in material terms, then the quality of the school, on Coleman's data, counted for virtually nothing.

When other things were equal, the report said, factors such as the amount of money spent per pupil, or the number of books in the library, or physical facilities such as gymnasiums or cafeterias or laboratories, or even differences in the curriculum, seemed to make no appreciable difference to the children's level of achievement. Nothing could have more flatly contradicted the assumptions on which the Administration in Washington, and urban school boards across the country, were pouring money into compensatory education programs.

As we shall see, the report exploded with immense force underground, sending seismic shocks through the academic and bureaucratic worlds of education. But on the surface the shock was not at first apparent. There were two main reasons for this. The first was that the report was, after all, long, tough, dry, and technical. It had been written in five months in order to comply with a congressional deadline, and it therefore made no attempt to point a moral or adorn a tale: it was essentially a mass of data. All of these characteristics militated against its being reported in detail by, for example, the Associated Press, the source from which most American newspapers get most of their out-of-town news.

The Office of Education, which realized all too clearly how explosive the report was, didn't exactly trumpet the news to the world. The report was released, by a hallowed bureaucratic stratagem, on the eve of July 4, 1966. Few reporters care to spend that holiday gutting 737 pages of regression analysis and standard deviations. And to head off those few who might have been tempted to make the effort if they guessed that there was a good story at the end of it, the Office of Education put out a summary report which can only be described as misleading. "Nationally," it said, to take one example, "Negroes have fewer of some of the facilities that seem most related to academic achievement." That was true. But it was not the significant truth.

The point was that the gap was far smaller than anyone expected it to be. To take one of the summary report's own examples, it was true that Negro children had "less access" to chemistry labs than whites. But the difference was that only 94 percent of them, as compared to 98 percent of whites, went to schools with chemistry labs. That was hardly the kind of difference which could explain any large part of the gap between white and black achievements in school, let alone that larger gap, lurking in the back of every educational policy maker's mind, between the average status and

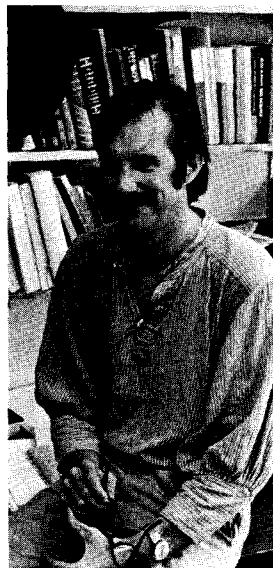
income of blacks and whites in life after they leave school.

A few attempts were made to discredit the survey. But the Coleman findings were in greater danger of being ignored than of being controverted when, at the beginning of the academic year in the fall of 1966, Pat Moynihan began to apply his talents to make sure that the report should not be ignored. He and Professor Thomas Pettigrew of the Harvard School of Education organized a Seminar on the Equality of Educational Opportunity Report (SEEOR). The seminar met every week at the Harvard Faculty Club, and by the end more than eighty people had taken part.

Moynihan had taken the precaution of getting a grant for expenses from the Carnegie Corporation, some of which was laid out on refreshments, stronger than coffee or cookies. "It was quite something, that seminar," says Jencks, reminiscing. "Pat always had the very best booze and the best cigars." But if Moynihan is a connoisseur of the good things in life, he also knows how to generate intellectual excitement, or to spot where it is welling up.

"When I was at the School of Education ten years ago," Jencks says, "almost nobody who was literate was interested in education. The educational sociologists and psychologists, the educational economists, they were all pretty near the bottom of the heap. Suddenly that's changed."

"That seminar taught me something about Harvard," Moynihan says. "People here are not interested in a problem when they think it's solved. There are no reputations to be made there. But when something which people think was locked up opens up, suddenly they all want to get involved." People started coming up to Moynihan in Harvard Yard and asking if they could take part: statisticians, economists, pediatricians, Professor Abram Chayes from the Law School (and the Kennedy State Department). Education had become



Christopher Jencks

fashionable. Jason Epstein of Random House and Charles E. Silberman from *Fortune* magazine started coming up from New York.

Harvard had seen nothing quite like it since the arms control seminars of the late 1950s, at which the future strategic policies of the Kennedy Administration were forged and the nucleus of the elite that was to operate them in government was

brought together. In the intervening decade, domestic social questions had reasserted their urgency. Education had emerged as the field where all the agonizing problems of race, poverty, and the cities seemed to intersect.

If schools, as Seymour Martin Lipset paraphrased Coleman, "make no difference," what could explain the inequalities of achievement in school and afterwards? One school of thought was ready and waiting in the wings with an answer. In the winter of 1969, the following words appeared in an article in the *Harvard Educational Review*:

There is an increasing realization among students of the psychology of the disadvantaged that the discrepancy in their average performance cannot be completely or directly attributed to discrimination or inequalities in education. It seems not unreasonable, in view of the fact that intelligence variation has a large genetic component, to hypothesize that genetic factors may play a part in this picture.

The author was Professor Arthur Jensen, not a Harvard man, but an educational psychologist from Berkeley with a national reputation. He had jabbed his finger at the rawest, most sensitive spot in the entire system of liberal thinking about education and equality in America. For after more than a generation of widespread IQ testing, it is an experimental finding, beloved of racists and profoundly disconcerting to liberals, that while the average white IQ is 100, the average black IQ is 85. Racists have seen in this statistical finding confirmation of a theory of innate biological inferiority. Conservatives have seen in it an argument against heavy expenditures on education, and against efforts to desegregate. And liberals have retorted that the lower average performance of blacks is due either to cultural bias in the tests used or to unfavorable environmental factors which require redoubled efforts on the part of social policy makers.

Jensen marched straight into the fiercest of this cross fire. He argued two propositions in particular in his article: that research findings suggest that heredity explains more of the differences in IQ between individuals than does environment, and that heredity accounts for the differences between the average IQ's of groups as well as between those of individuals.

The article was scholarly in tone. In form it was largely a recital of research data. And it was tentative in its conclusion that perhaps more of the differential between blacks' and whites' average IQ's was due to heredity than to environment. That did not stop it from causing a most formidable rumpus. It became a ninety days' wonder in the press and the news magazines. It was discussed at a Cabinet meeting. And Students for a Democratic Society

rampaged around the Berkeley campus chanting "Fight racism! Fire Jensen!"

Two years later, a long article in *The Atlantic* by Professor Richard Herrnstein on the history and implications of IQ provoked a reaction which showed that the sensitivity of the issue had by no means subsided. Herrnstein touched only gingerly on the racial issue. "Although there are scraps of evidence for a genetic component in the black-white difference," he wrote, "the overwhelming case is for believing that American blacks have been at an environmental disadvantage . . . a neutral commentator (a rarity these days) would have to say that the case is simply not settled, given our present stage of knowledge."

Neutral commentators certainly proved rare among those who wrote in to the editor. Arthur Jensen wrote to say that Herrnstein's essay was "the most accurately informative psychological article I have ever read in the popular press"; while a professor from the University of Connecticut said: "This is not new. Hitler's propagandists used the same tactics in the thirties while his metal workers put the finishing touches on the gas ovens."

If Herrnstein—understandably enough—tiptoed cautiously around the outskirts of the black-white IQ argument, he charged boldly enough into another part of the field. The closer society came to its ideal of unimpeded upward social mobility, the closer he predicted it would come to "meritocracy," a visionary state of society described by the British sociologist Michael Young. A new upper class composed of the descendants of the most successful competitors with the highest IQ's would defend its own advantage far more skillfully and successfully than did the old aristocracies. Herrnstein did not welcome this trend; he merely argued that it might be inevitable. "Our society may be sorting itself willy-nilly into inherited castes," he concluded gloomily. Or, as his Harvard colleague David K. Cohen neatly epigrammatized Herrnstein's long article in a rejoinder in *Commentary*, "His essay questioned the traditional liberal idea that stupidity results from the inheritance of poverty, contending instead that poverty results from the inheritance of stupidity."

Cohen went on to disagree with Herrnstein's prediction. "America is not a meritocracy," he wrote, "if by that we mean a society in which income, status, or power are heavily determined by IQ. . . . Being stupid is not what is responsible for being poor in America."

But that still left the original question open.

If differences in the quality of schools, as measured by money, facilities, and curricula, don't explain inequality, because the differences between the schools attended by children of different racial groups are simply not that great in those respects, then what does? Genetic differentials in IQ, per-

haps, says Jensen. Nonsense, says a majority of the educational community; the explanation is more likely to be integration—or rather the lack of it.

“I’m a Southern liberal,” says Tom Pettigrew. “There are only about thirty of us, and my wife says we all know each other.” Pettigrew comes from Richmond, Virginia, but his father immigrated from Scotland, and there is something about him that strikes one as more typically Scots than Southern. He is a shy man with a passion for methodological precision: “I really believe that data can free us,” he says. He also has a deceptive, because quiet, commitment to the liberal faith.

The Coleman report gave only three pages to the effects of desegregation, and Pettigrew didn’t think that was enough. At Jim Coleman’s explicit insistence, the data bank of the survey was to be made generally available for the cost of the computer tapes. Pettigrew persuaded the Civil Rights Commission to take advantage of this and to re-analyze the data to see what light it cast on the effects of desegregation. David Cohen and Pettigrew were the main authors of the resulting survey, which came out in 1967 as *Racial Isolation in the Public Schools* and gave the impression that the Coleman data supported desegregation. This was true up to a point. Coleman had concluded that desegregation did have an effect. But his report also showed that social class had a greater effect. Pettigrew is not much troubled by this, because of the close connection between race and social class in America. “Two-thirds of the whites are middle-class,” he says, “and two-thirds of the blacks are working-class.”

Pettigrew also draws a sharp distinction between desegregation and integration. By integration he means an atmosphere of genuine acceptance and friendly respect across racial lines, and he believes that mere desegregation won’t help blacks to do better in school until this kind of atmosphere is achieved. He is impressed by the work of Professor Irwin Katz, who has found that black children do best in truly integrated situations, moderately well in all-black situations, and worst of all in “inter-racial situations characterized by stress and threat.”

Pettigrew believes, in other words, that integration, as opposed to mere desegregation, will be needed to bring black children’s achievement up to equality with whites’. And he argues that no one can say that integration hasn’t worked, for the simple reason that it hasn’t been tried.

“The U.S. is going through a period of self-flagellation,” he said to me. “I dispute the argument that Moynihan is forever putting out. He says liberalism was tried and didn’t work.” This, as we shall see, misstates Moynihan’s views. The difficulty is partly semantic. Moynihan believes that past policies, which can be called “liberal,” have

“worked” in the sense that they have produced a surprising degree of equality in terms of all the resources that go into schools, without, however, achieving equality of outcome. “I say liberalism hasn’t been tried,” Pettigrew goes on. “Racial integration has yet to be tried in this country.” Desegregation proceeded so slowly, Pettigrew says, that the courts “got mad and started ruling for busing in 1969 and 1970.” Until desegregation is achieved, he argues, we won’t know whether integration works.

The Civil Rights Commission’s report on racial isolation did recommend that the federal government set a national standard that no black children should go to a school that was more than 50 percent black. In practical terms, that meant busing. And, in fact, Pettigrew argues that some busing will be needed to achieve desegregation—and thus to produce the physical circumstances in which integration as he understands it can take place. He has been actively involved as a witness in several desegregation suits in which he has advocated busing.

It is, therefore, as Pettigrew himself wryly remarks, an irony that he should have suggested to one of his junior colleagues at the Harvard School of Education that he do a study on busing. The colleague’s name was David Armor, and Pettigrew’s idea was that it would be interesting to take a look at Project Metco, a scheme for busing children out of Roxbury, the main Boston ghetto, into nearby white suburban schools.

That was in 1969. Three years later, a paper by David Armor called “The Evidence on Busing” was published in *The Public Interest*. Armor said he had concentrated on the question of whether “induced integration”—that is, busing—“enhances black achievement, self-esteem, race relations, and opportunities for higher education.” In a word, Armor maintained that it did not.

The article used data not only from Project Metco but from reports of four other Northern programs for induced integration: in White Plains, New York; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Riverside, California; and New Haven and Hartford, Connecticut. And on the basis of this data,² Armor maintained that “the available evidence . . . indicates that busing is *not* an effective policy instrument for raising the achievement of blacks or for increasing interracial harmony.”

“None of the studies,” said Armor, “were able to demonstrate conclusively that integration has had an effect on academic achievement as measured by standardized tests.” Aspirations, indeed, were high

² Armor mentioned three other studies: one from Berkeley, California, one from Evanston, Illinois, and one from Rochester, New York.

Do Schools Make a Difference?

among the black children in Project Metco. But they might be too high, in view of the fact that, while 80 percent of them started college, half of them dropped out. As for race relations, Armor found the bused students not only more militant but actually more hostile to integration than the study's "control group," which was not bused. Militancy, as measured, for example, by sympathy with the Black Panthers, seemed to be particularly rife among those children who had high aspirations (such as going to college) but were getting C grades or below in competitive suburban high schools.

But Armor did not limit himself to reporting the results of his own Metco study and the other four studies. His article was a sweeping, slashing attack on the whole tradition of liberal social science. He described what he called the "integration policy model," based on social science research going back to the time of John Dollard and Gunnar Myrdal. Though the "real goals of social science and public policy are not in opposition," Armor said, he claimed that almost all of the "major premises of the integration policy model are not supported by the data"—by which he meant the studies he quoted.

It was a frontal assault on the liberal tradition in the social sciences for a generation: on "forty years of studies," as one of his opponents put it. At one point Armor came close to accusing his opponents of deliberate dishonesty: "There is the danger that important research may be stopped when the desired results are not forthcoming. The current controversy over the busing of schoolchildren affords a prime example."

It was not likely that such an attack would go unanswered, and, in fact, the response was both swift and severe. Pettigrew and three colleagues fired back a critique which called Armor's article "a distorted and incomplete review." To back up their charge, they argued that the studies Armor had cited as "the evidence on busing" were highly selective. Armor had not discussed seven other studies which they said met his own methodological criteria—from New York, Buffalo, Rochester, Newark, Philadelphia, Sacramento, and North Carolina—surveys which had reported positive achievement results for bused blacks. The integrationists also found what they claimed were disastrous weaknesses in Armor's own Metco study. For one thing, they said, he compared the bused children with a control group which included children who were also attending desegregated schools, though not under Project Metco. "Incredible as it sounds," Pettigrew and his colleagues commented, "Dr. Armor compared children who were bused to desegregated schools with other children many of whom were also bused to desegregated schools. Not surprisingly he found few differences between them."

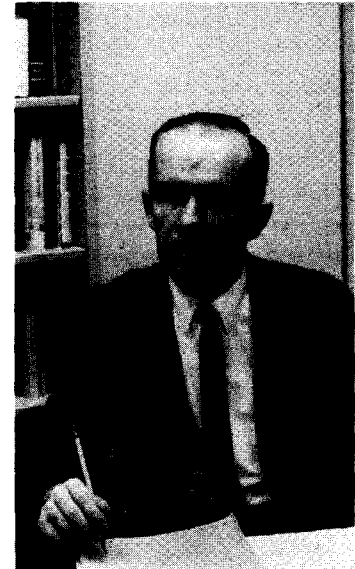
"We respect Dr. Armor's right to publish his views against mandatory busing," they said. "But

we challenge his claim that those views are based on scientific evidence." (Armor is replying to the critique in *The Public Interest*, the journal which published his paper.)

If the tone of the public controversy sounds rough, it was positively courtly compared to the atmosphere inside William James Hall, the new Harvard high-rise where Pettigrew and Armor had their offices, two doors apart.

Armor, too, started out on the left. He was president of the student body at Berkeley in 1959-1960, and head of SLATE, a forerunner of the radical Free Speech Movement there. He was also a protégé of Pettigrew's at Harvard, and indeed a close friend. But by the spring of 1972, Pettigrew realized that Armor had become vehemently opposed to mandatory busing.

Both men became very bitter. Armor failed to get tenure at Harvard, and has now moved to a visiting professorship at UCLA. Armor accused



Thomas Pettigrew

one of Pettigrew's assistants of breaking into his office to steal his Metco data. Pettigrew wrote to the *New York Times*: "There is no evidence beyond the allegation itself for the charge, much less any link between the paper's critics and the alleged intrusion." Armor accused Pettigrew of suppressing his paper; Pettigrew does concede that he told Armor that he had done "incomparable harm" by publishing it.

Temper, in short, were comprehensively lost over the Armor affair. Much of the bitterness, no doubt, must be put down to personal factors. But it would be wrong to dismiss the episode as a mere squabble between professors. For it shows just how traumatically a world where consensus reigned half a dozen years ago has been affected by the pressure to abandon certain cherished premises. And the issue, after all, is the interrelationship of education, race, and equality in America, which is not exactly a recondite academic quibble.

To an unbiased eye ("a rarity these days," as Richard Herrnstein might say), Armor's paper has been rather seriously impugned. It does not follow that his central thesis is entirely discredited. Even Pettigrew was quoted, at the height of the row, as saying that "nobody is claiming that integration has been a raving success." "That's not what they were saying before," says Moynihan. And Christopher Jencks, who can hardly be accused of conservative prejudice, has summed up the evidence

in the most cautious and equivocal way. Blacks, he says, might do much better in "truly integrated schools, whatever they may be." Failing that consummation, devoutly to be wished, the benefits of desegregation appear to be spotty, and busing can be expected to yield contradictory results.

Jencks's position is easily misunderstood. In an interview, he drew some distinctions for me. He reminded me that he had himself written that the Coleman report "put the weight of social science behind integration." It was not until Armor's article was published, he said, that social scientists began to argue that desegregation itself might not work. Jencks personally feels that Armor's data were shaky, and that the effect of Armor's paper came from its review of other studies—a review which, as Pettigrew pointed out, does not refer to all the available studies. Jencks himself thinks that desegregation is probably necessary, simply in order to meet the constitutional requirements of the Fourteenth Amendment, in virtually every urban school district in the country. He does, however, have personal reservations about mandatory busing, on libertarian grounds. The furthest he would go was to say, "I think that a case can be made out that busing might be a useful part of an overall strategy of desegregation." That is not to say that he has any tenderness toward segregation. On the contrary, he rejects it as absolutely as any of the "integrationists." The difference is that Jencks does not think that segregation explains nearly as much of existing inequality as the integrationists think it does.

But with Armor's paper and its reception, we are getting ahead of the story. The Coleman report came out in 1966. It was not until 1972 that two major books appeared, each an attempt to reassess the whole question of the relationship between education and equality in America in the light of the Coleman data. Each was collaborative.

The first of these two books was the Random House collection of papers arising out of the SEEO seminar, which was published as *On Equality of Educational Opportunity*, with Frederick Mosteller (professor of mathematical statistics at Harvard) and Daniel Patrick Moynihan as co-editors. Most of the leading participants in the debate contributed chapters: Pettigrew and Armor, Coleman, David Cohen, and Christopher Jencks among them. The introductory essay was signed jointly by Mosteller and Moynihan. If much of the technical analysis and of the drafting were Mosteller's, the essay's style and conclusions are vintage Moynihan.

Later in the year, Christopher Jencks and seven of his colleagues (two of whom, Marshall Smith and David Cohen, had also contributed to the Mosteller-Moynihan volume) published an only

slightly less massive book: *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America*. This work displays considerably more intellectual cohesion than the Mosteller-Moynihan book, presumably because Jencks actually wrote his group's text himself from start to finish and, according to the preface, it "embodies his prejudices and obsessions, and these are not shared by all the authors." But again, though the book draws upon data from dozens of other large- and small-scale surveys, the data from the Coleman survey are the bedrock and foundation.

The enormous body of analysis and reinterpretation in these two books represents the completion of the first stage of the reaction to Coleman. I began by quoting Professor Lipset's hasty shorthand for Coleman's central discovery: "schools make no difference." Professor Pettigrew draws an important distinction. "Never once was it said that schools make no difference. The belief that Coleman hit was the belief that you could make a difference with money." (He added: "Americans are crazy in the head about money; they think you can do everything with money.") However that may be, the nub of the discovery that has set off the whole prolonged, disturbing, confusing, sometimes bitter debate can be expressed as a simple syllogism:

(1) The "quality" of the schools attended by black and white children in America was more nearly equal than anyone supposed. (2) The gap between the achievement of black and white children got wider, not narrower, over twelve years at school. (3) Therefore there was no reason to suppose that increasing the flow of resources into the schools would affect the outcome in terms of achievement, let alone eliminate inequality.

Among the social scientists, the central ground of debate about the meaning of those findings now lies between Jencks and Moynihan. It is a strange debate, for the two protagonists have much in common, even if one does have New Left loyalties, and the other served in Nixon's White House and now as Nixon's Ambassador to India. Both use the same data. Indeed, the spectacle of social scientists reaching into the same data bank for ammunition to fire at each other is sometimes reminiscent of war between two legs of the same octopus. Both agree on many of the implications of the data, and on many of the conclusions to be drawn from them. Yet those who lump the two professors together, as many practical educators and civil rights lawyers do, as "Moynihan and Jencks and those people up at Harvard," could hardly be more wrong. The two men are divided by temperament and ideology in the preconceptions they bring to the data, and ultimately in the policy prescriptions they draw from that data.

Perhaps the very heart of their disagreement, after all, comes down to a matter of temperament. Is

a glass half empty, or is it half full? A pessimist will say it is half empty when an optimist says it is half full. Pat Moynihan (and his co-author Mosteller—but I should be surprised if these particular thoughts were not Moynihan's contribution, since they coincide with so much that he has said and written elsewhere) looked at the Coleman data and made the very reasonable inference that if the differences in quality between the schools attended by different groups of children in the United States were so much smaller than everyone had expected to find them, then the United States had come much closer to realizing the goal of equality of educational opportunity than most people realized. He then chose to relate this to the general question of social optimism versus social pessimism. At the time of the Coleman report's publication, "a certain atmosphere of 'cultural despair' was gathering in the nation," they wrote, "and has since been more in evidence. Some would say more in order. We simply disagree with such despair."

One of the specific recommendations of the Mosteller-Moynihan essay is optimism. The electorate should maintain the pressure on government and school boards, the essay urges, "with an attitude that optimistically expects gains, but, knowing their rarity, appreciates them when they occur." Yet on examination this is a strange use of the word optimism. For optimism normally connotes an attitude toward the future. But the emotion that is being evoked here has more to do with the past: it is not optimism so much as pride. "The nation entered the middle third of the twentieth century bound to the mores of caste and class. The white race was dominant. . . . Education beyond a fairly rudimentary point was largely determined by social status. In a bare third of a century these circumstances have been extensively changed. *Changed!* Not merely a sequence of events drifting in one direction or another. To the contrary, events have been bent to the national will." True, the essay concedes, the period ended with racial tensions higher than ever before, and with dissatisfaction with the educational system approaching crisis. Nevertheless, say Moynihan and Mosteller, we should accentuate the positive. "It is simply extraordinary that so much has been done. . . . No small achievement! In truth, a splendid one. . . . It truly is not sinful to take modest satisfaction in our progress."

Swept along by the dithyrambic rhythm of these tributes to past policies, it would be easy to conclude that Moynihan thinks they should be pressed to the utmost. But he does not. When I asked him why not, he replied promptly, if cryptically: "Production functions." In an article in the fall, 1972, issue of *The Public Interest*, he spells out what he means. The argument is characteristically simple, forceful, and provocative.

Proposition 1: "The most striking aspect of educational expenditure is how large it has become." It has now reached \$1000 per pupil per annum, and it has been rising at 9.7 percent annually for the last ten years, while the GNP has risen 6.8 percent.

Proposition 2 (the Coleman point): Maybe not much learning takes place in a school without teachers or a roof. But "after a point school expenditure does not seem to have any notable influence on school achievement."

There are, Moynihan concedes, considerable regional, class, racial, and ethnic variations in achievement, and he would like to see them disappear. "But it is simply not clear that school expenditure is the heart of the matter."

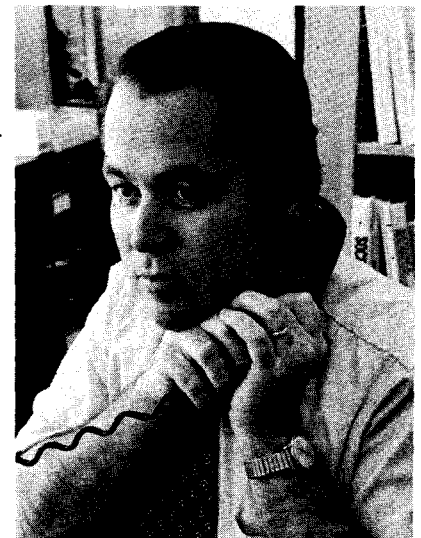
This is where the production function, or what is more familiar to laymen as the law of diminishing returns, comes in, according to Moynihan. The liberal faith held that expenditure of resources on education would produce not merely a greater equality in scholastic achievement, but greater equality in society. On the contrary, says Moynihan, additional expenditure on education (and indeed on certain other social policies) is likely to produce greater *inequality*, at least of income.

The day the students leafleted Christopher Jencks in Harvard Yard, Moynihan said to me: "They're defending a class interest." What he meant was that as future teachers, or social workers, or administrators of education or social policies, left-wing students had a vested economic interest in the high-investment "liberal" policies they defended.

"Any increase in school expenditure," Moynihan wrote in *The Public Interest*, "will in the first instance accrue to teachers, who receive about 68% of the operating expenditure of elementary and secondary schools. That these are estimable and deserving persons none should doubt"—Brutus is an honorable man—"but neither should there be any illusion that they are deprived." With teachers earning some \$10,000 a year on the average, he argues, and with many of them married women with well-paid husbands, "increasing educational expenditures will have the short-run effect of income inequality."

As a matter of statistical fact, that may be literally true. But it is a peculiar argument nonetheless, for several reasons. For, leaving aside the matter of their spouses' incomes,

David Armor



teachers are not, relatively, a highly paid group. Marginal increases in their salaries have an imperceptible effect on inequality in the national income distribution.

Whatever its merits, however, Moynihan's position is plain. But it is worth noting that this position fits oddly with an exhortation to optimism. There is indeed nothing sinful about taking satisfaction in past progress; but when this attitude is combined with skepticism about the benefits to be expected from future public expenditure, it is usually called not optimistic but conservative.

Like Moynihan, Christopher Jencks is concerned with equality, not only in the schools but also in the world after school. The essence, and the originality, of his thinking lie in the use he makes of two crucial, though in themselves unoriginal, distinctions.

The first distinction is between equality of opportunity and equality of condition. Most Americans say they are in favor of equality. But what most of them mean by this is equality of opportunity. What we have learned from the Coleman report, says Jencks, and from the fate of the reforms of the 1960s, is that contrary to the conventional wisdom, you cannot have equality of opportunity without a good deal of equality of condition—now and not in the hereafter.

This is where the second of Jencks's distinctions comes in. Where the Coleman survey, and most of the work published in the Mosteller-Moynihan volume, looked at the degree of equality between groups, Jencks is more interested in inequality between individuals. Coleman's conception of equality looked at the distribution of opportunity between two groups. For Coleman, as Marshall Smith puts it, if you laid the distribution curve of one group over the distribution curve of the other, and they coincided exactly, then you could say that the two groups were equal. And Coleman found that between white and black Americans, this was closer to being true than most people had suspected. "Sandy Jencks is saying that though this may apply as between groups, this approximate equality disappears when you look at individuals."

It is cause for shock, he says in the preface to his book, "that white workers earn 50 percent more than black workers." But it is a good deal more shocking "that the best-paid fifth of all white workers earns 600 percent more than the worst-paid fifth. From this point of view, racial inequality looks almost insignificant"—by comparison with economic inequality.

Is the glass half empty, or half full? If Moynihan's instinct is to emphasize the real progress that has been made toward reducing inequality in America, Jencks stresses how much inequality remains, not only in educational opportunity, in learn-

ing skills, and in educational credentials but also in job status, in job satisfaction, and in income.

The trouble is, he points out—and here I am summarizing an argument which is based, step by step, on mountains of statistical data—that whatever measure you take—income, socioeconomic status, or education—there is plenty of inequality among Americans. But the same people by no means always come out at the same point on each measure. In the social scientists' terms, these different

kinds of inequality don't "correlate" very closely. It follows that school reform is not likely to effect much greater equality outside the school. The "factory model," which assumes that the school's outcome is the direct product of its inputs, must be abandoned, says Jencks. For him, a school is in reality more like a family than a factory.

This idea underlies a surprising strand in Jencks's thought. If there is no direct correlation between expenditure on schools and effects on society—for example, in producing greater equality between racial groups—some would draw the lesson that it is not worth spending more than a (possibly quite high) minimum on schools. (That is something like Moynihan's theoretical position, as we have seen.) No, says Jencks, spend more money; not because of the benefits it will bring in some sociological hereafter but simply because people spend something close to a fifth of their life in school, and it is better that they spend that time in a pleasant and comfortable environment.

"There is no evidence," Jencks writes, "that building a school playground will affect the students' chances of learning to read, getting into college, or earning \$50,000 a year when they are fifty. Building a playground may, however, have a considerable effect on the students' chances of having a good time during recess when they are eight." And in a recent statement protesting the use of the conclusions which *Inequality* reaches "to justify limiting educational expenditures and abandoning efforts at desegregation," Jencks writes that "educators will have to keep struggling," and that "they need more help than they are currently getting." But he concludes that the egalitarian trend in American education over the last thirty years has not made the distribution of either income or status outside the schools much more equal. He writes: "As long as egalitarians assume that public policy cannot contribute to economic equality



James Coleman

directly, but must proceed by ingenious manipulation of marginal institutions like the schools, progress will remain glacial."

"Marginal institutions like the schools"! The phrase sets Jencks every bit as far outside the old liberal orthodoxy as Moynihan's suggestion that spending money on schools may actually increase inequality. Fourteen words from the end of his book Jencks unfurls a word which startles many of his readers. "If we want to move beyond this tradition, we will have to establish political control over the economic institutions that shape our society. That is what other countries usually call socialism. Anything less will end in the same disappointment as the reforms of the 1960s."³

Norman Drachler was superintendent of the huge, tormented Detroit public school system from 1966 to 1971. When I talked to him recently, he was going through the anguish of liberal educators who had the intellectual honesty to try to reconcile the new teachings of the social scientists with the working assumptions of a lifetime of effort.

He showed me a headline from the New York Times of December 4, 1966, which perfectly summed up the pre-Coleman orthodoxy. WHEN SPENDING FOR EDUCATION IS LOW, it said, ARMY INTELLIGENCE TEST FAILURES ARE HIGH. And he showed me figures to prove that when federal money under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was concentrated on the schools with the greatest need in Detroit, reading scores improved by two months from 1965 to 1971, while the city-wide average declined by two months. "In the worst schools, Title I helped to arrest a disastrous fall," says Drachler. "Where we spent more money, we did do better."

How did he square this with the Coleman report?

"I think Coleman is basically correct. With bet-

ter schools we can only make a small difference. But it is worth that investment."

The post-Coleman challenge to the case for spending money on education is beginning to echo through the halls of Congress, ominously for the supporters of federal aid to education, who include both Representative John Brademas, Democrat of Indiana, the chairman of the House Select Subcommittee on Education, and one of his Republican colleagues, Representative Albert Quie of Minnesota. In a recent speech Quie has made it plain that he remains to be convinced that compensatory education makes no difference. John Brademas is afraid that the social science findings, misunderstood or deliberately misrepresented, will be used to justify savage cuts in federal aid to elementary and secondary education and to make opposition to such programs respectable. He is deeply skeptical of the case against the efficacy of educational spending, pointing out not only that federal aid still amounts to only 7 percent of the cost of elementary and secondary schooling but also that in many cases funds intended under Title I for compensatory education for underprivileged children have been indiscriminately spent for political reasons on middle-class children, so that few valid conclusions can be drawn from the experience of Title I. He feels adrift without adequate information, while the opponents of educational spending are able to use the social scientists' evidence, often disingenuously. In his own reelection campaign in Indiana last fall he was amused, but not happy, to find his Republican opponent quoting what he called the "Colombo report" (meaning the Coleman report) at him.

Education lobbyists claim that the "Jencks report" has been freely cited by the Nixon Administration's Office of Management and Budget on Capitol Hill in justification of the cuts in the fiscal 1974 budget. And even in some of the more conservative governors' offices, one lobbyist for elementary and secondary education told me there is a widespread feeling that "Coleman and Jencks" have the effect of giving education a low priority.

Money is one issue; integration is another. Although, as Christopher Jencks put it to me, "the impact both of Coleman and of the Moynihan-Mosteller book is to put the support of social science behind integration," and even though a majority of the social scientists who have spoken up remains integrationist, there is no mistaking the chill which the Armor paper, supported as it has been to some extent by various influential figures in the intellectual community, has sent down the spines of the integrationists. Last November, for example, Harold Howe, U.S. Commissioner for Education in the Johnson Administration (he is now with the Ford Foundation), conceded that "the lively researches of statistically oriented social scientists have cast some shadows on conventional

³ In one sense, Moynihan is closer to Jencks than is generally supposed. When he went to work for President Nixon, both he and the President were fully aware of the Coleman conclusions. At that point, in February, 1969, two documents arrived on Moynihan's desk within seventy-two hours. The first was Arthur Jensen's article, which started from the proposition that compensatory education wasn't working. The second document, the Ohio Westinghouse report, was a gloomy appraisal of one major experiment with compensatory education, Project Headstart. Moynihan says that the conception of his Family Assistance Plan was directly influenced by the social science findings about education and equality. "The argument was put to the President," he says, "that enormous expectations had built up that you could achieve racial equality through compensatory education, and it was not working. Point two: a proposition had been put forward by Dr. Jensen which the democracy could not live with. Therefore, point three: you had to move directly to income redistribution." There is an ironic parallel here—if a distant one—to the way in which Christopher Jencks concludes his book *Inequality*.

assumptions about the benefits of integration, particularly in the schools."

The first place where those shadows would fall is in the courts, which are now jammed with cases arising from the tough desegregation orders made by federal judges in all parts of the country since 1969. Integrationists insist that the law requires school desegregation under the Fourteenth Amendment, wholly independent of social science data regarding its effect. As former Chief Justice Earl Warren put it in a recent interview with Dr. Abram Sachar of Brandeis, *Brown* was a race case, not an education case. And so far the judges have upheld the principle that the requirement of desegregation in the law is independent of evidence about its effect.

But already the courts have begun to hear social science evidence about the equality of achievement in schools. In *Keyes* (the Denver school desegregation case which the Supreme Court has already heard, but on which it has not yet handed down its opinion), Judge William Doyle, in the district court, asked for evidence about the achievement of seventeen schools which he found to be segregated, though not as a result of public policy. James Coleman himself was one of the witnesses, and he testified that while compensatory education had proved disappointing, desegregation might be helpful.

David Armor was a witness on the other side in one of the Detroit desegregation hearings. But in the Memphis case, where his paper was produced in evidence, the court of appeals gave it short shrift. Judge Anthony Celebrezze (a former Democratic Secretary of HEW) dismissed it as "a single piece of much criticized sociological research," and said "it would be presumptuous in the extreme for us to refuse to follow a Supreme Court decision on the basis of such meager evidence."

Judicial reaction generally, says Louis Lucas, a Memphis lawyer who appeared for plaintiffs in both the Detroit and Memphis cases, "has been to say 'a plague on both your houses' to the social scientists. They have noticed how much criticism of the new findings there has been, and they say in effect, 'We are not going to re-try *Brown*.'"

But that is exactly what less sanguine integrationists are afraid the Supreme Court will do, with respect to the most difficult Northern desegregation cases: not frontally, but by erosion. Norman Drachler, for example, told me he thought it very probable that the Burger Court would find some way to re-try *Brown* without seeming to do so. Nick Flannery, of the Harvard Center for Law and Education, told me that "the Burger Court will almost certainly be looking for distinctions to draw that will narrow the scope of *Brown*."

Flannery suggested some possibilities. The Court could adopt Judge Doyle's argument (in the Denver case) that not all segregation results from pub-

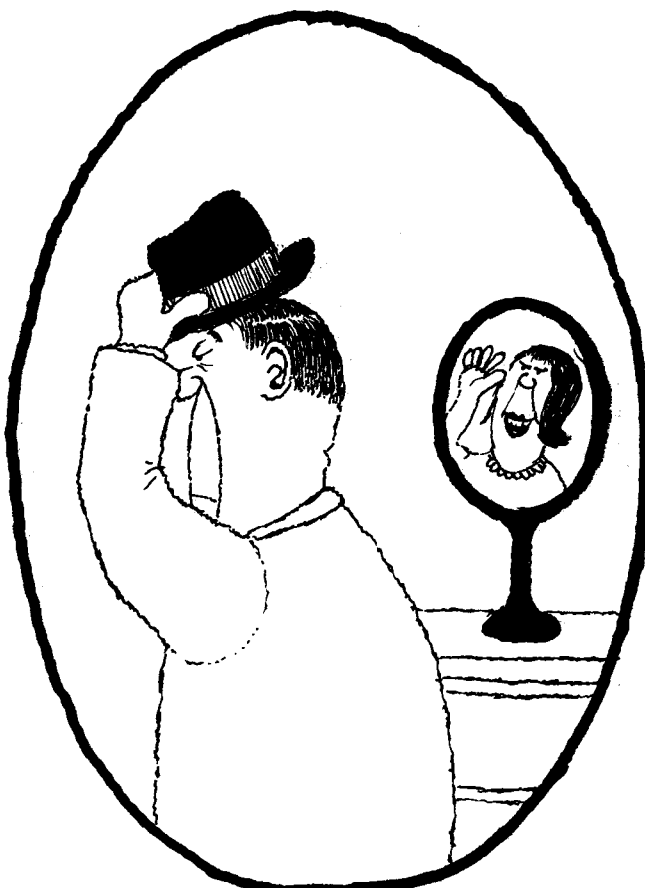
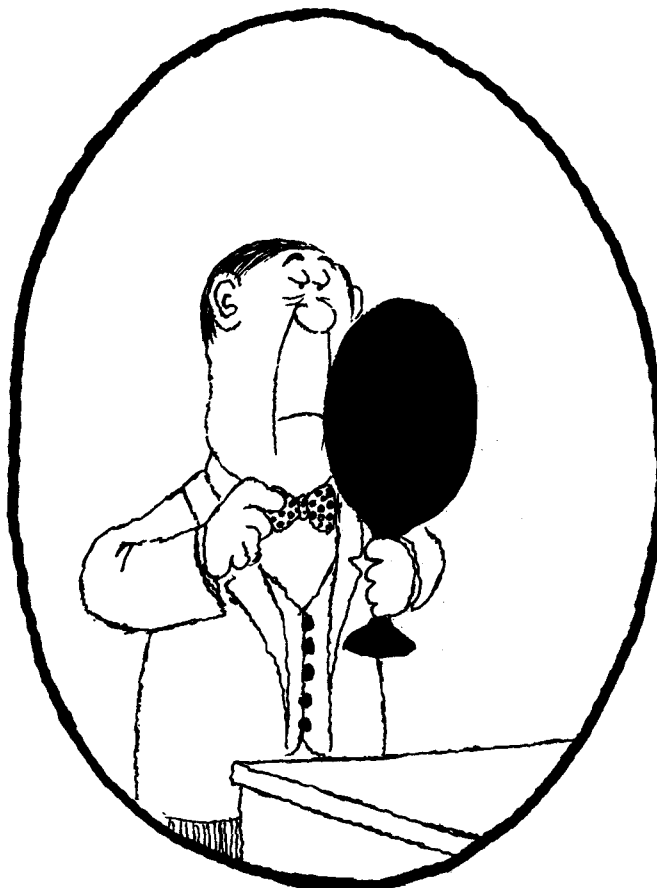
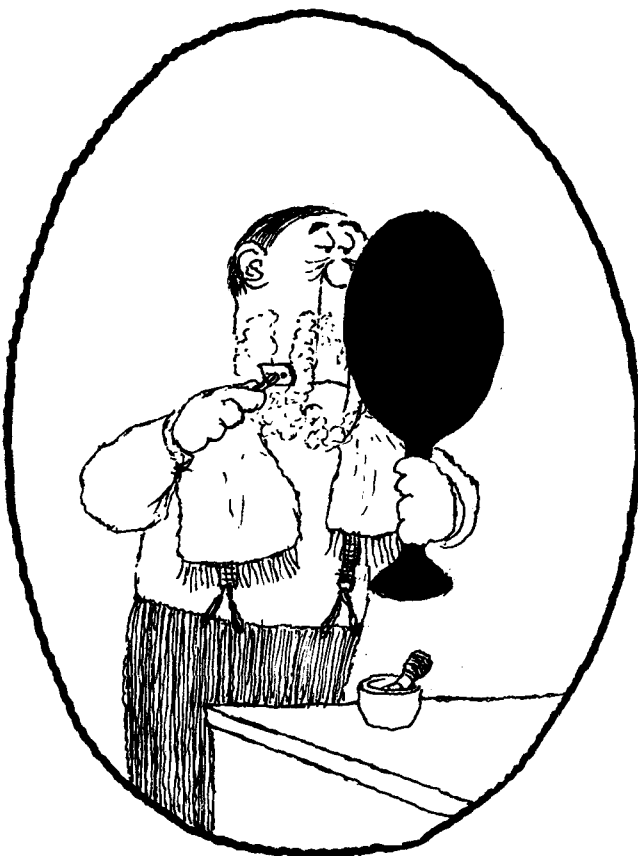
lic policy. Or it could adopt the Justice Department's contention that the wrong to be remedied is not segregation itself, but discrimination, so that the plaintiff can get relief only when he can show not merely generalized segregation but particular instances of discrimination. In the *Swann* case, in 1971, having to do with Charlotte, North Carolina, Chief Justice Warren Burger laid down the principle that the scope of the remedy need not exceed the scope of the violation. That might seem to lay the groundwork for limiting *Brown* in this way. Alternatively, the Court might reverse the integrationist doctrine that has been developing in the lower courts, by imposing burdens of proof on the plaintiffs which would make the process of bringing a school desegregation case even lengthier and more expensive than it is already.

Some years ago, the great historian of the South, C. Vann Woodward of Yale, compared the civil rights movement of the 1960s to the Reconstruction period after the Civil War and said that he thought this second Reconstruction was ending. There is a parallel in the intellectual world that Woodward did not draw. The 1870s—the years of "reunion and reaction," when the nation wearied of the political impasse created by white resistance to the Radicals' drive for Negro equality—were also the years when American intellectual life was swept by the ideas of Herbert Spencer and his followers, the Social Darwinists. Their enthusiasm for ruthless competition that would drive the weakest to the wall, for "anarchy with a policeman" as the type of society most likely to produce the highest evolution of man, did much to rationalize and to justify public indifference as white supremacy reasserted itself after Reconstruction. The skepticism about the efficacy of social reform which seems to be emerging from the social science of the Nixon era in itself, of course, bears no resemblance to the harsh Social Darwinism of the age of the Robber Barons. The only parallel would lie in the danger that this new skepticism which is eroding the confident liberal assumptions could be distorted and used to rationalize a second period of indifference in a nation once again weary of the stress of reform.

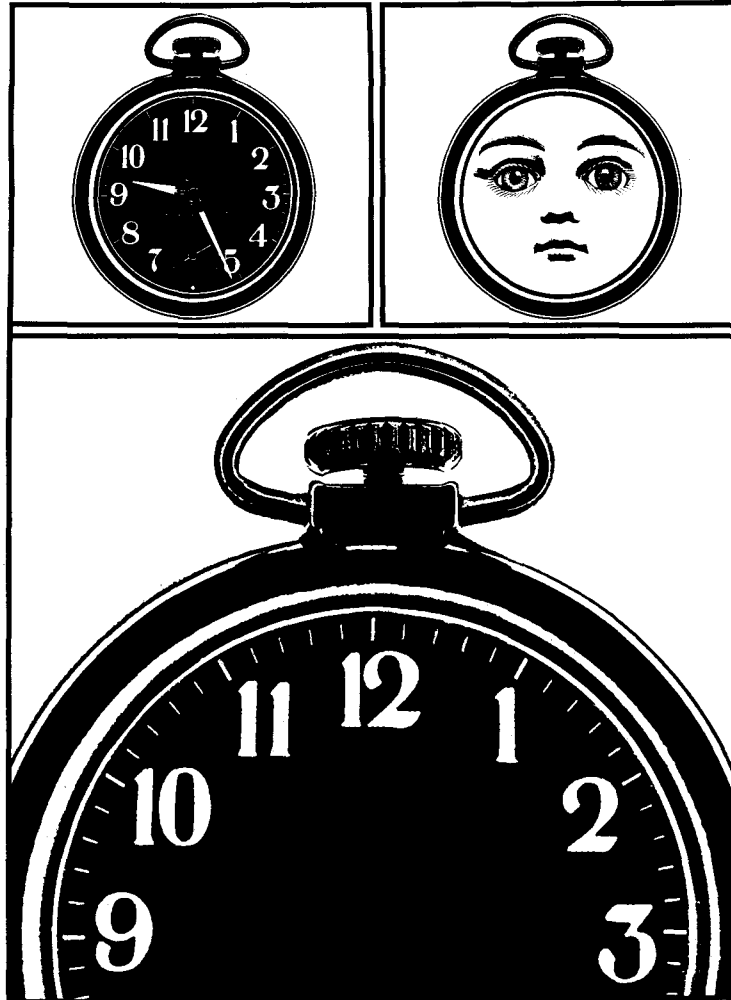
What can be said, at the end of the first stage of the reception of the Coleman doctrine, is that—whether you believe with Daniel Patrick Moynihan that liberal education policies of the last few generations have succeeded so well that they have run into diminishing returns, or with Christopher Jencks that they have proved disappointing—those policies, and the intellectual assumptions on which they were built, are in bad trouble. They have lost support in the ranks of the social scientists who provided America, from Roosevelt to Johnson, with a major part of its operating ideology. □

THE LAST LAUGH

by Fernando Krahn



IN RETIREMENT



He had lately taken to studying his old Greek grammar of fifty years ago. He read in Bulfinch and wanted to reread the *Odyssey* in Greek. His life had changed. He slept less these days and in the morning got up to stare at the sky over Gramercy Park. He watched the clouds until they took on shapes he could reflect on. He liked strange, haunted vessels and he liked to watch mythological birds and animals. He had noticed that if he contemplated these forms in the clouds, kept his mind on them for a while, there might be a diminution of his morning depression. Dr. Morris was sixty-six, a physician, retired for two years. He had shut down his practice in Queens and moved to Manhattan. He had retired himself after a heart attack, not too serious but serious enough. His first heart attack, he had decided, would be his last. His wife was dead and his

daughter lived in Scotland. He wrote her twice a month and heard from her twice a month. And though he had a few friends he visited, and kept up with medical journals, and liked museums and theater, generally he contended with loneliness. And he was concerned about the future; the future was old age advancing.

After a light breakfast he would dress warmly and go out for a walk around the Square. That was the easy part of the walk. He took this walk even when it was very cold, or nasty rainy, or had snowed several inches and he had to proceed very slowly. After the Square he crossed the street and went down Irving Place, a tall figure with a cape and cane, and picked up his *Times*. If the weather was not too bad he continued on to Fourteenth Street, around to Park Avenue South, up Park and along East Twentieth back to the narrow, tall,

A story by Bernard Malamud

white stone apartment building he lived in. Rarely, lately, had he gone in another direction, though when on the long walk he stopped at least once on the way, perhaps in front of a mid-block store, perhaps at a street corner, and asked himself where else he might go. This was the difficult part of the walk. What was difficult was that it made no difference where he went. He now wished he had not retired. He had become more conscious of his age since his retirement, although sixty-six was not eighty. Still it was old. He experienced moments of anguish.

One morning after his rectangular long walk in the rain, Dr. Morris found a letter on the rubber mat under the line of mailboxes in the lobby. It was a narrow, deep lobby with false green marble columns and several bulky chairs where few people ever sat. Dr. Morris had seen a young woman with long hair, in a white raincoat and maroon shoulder bag, carrying a plastic bubble umbrella, hurry down the vestibule steps and leave the house as he was about to enter. In fact he held the door open for her and got a breath of her bold perfume. He did not remember seeing her before and felt a momentary confusion as to who she might be. He later imagined her taking the letter out of her box, reading it hastily, then stuffing it into the maroon cloth purse she carried over her shoulder; but she had stuffed in the envelope and not the letter. That had fallen to the floor. He imagined this as he bent to retrieve it. It was a folded sheet of heavy white writing paper, written on in black in a masculine hand. The doctor unfolded and glanced at it without making out the salutation or any of its contents. He would have to put on his reading glasses, and he thought Flaherty, the doorman and elevator man, might see him if the elevator should suddenly descend. Of course, Flaherty might think the doctor was reading his own mail, except that he never read it, such as it was, in the lobby. He did not want the man thinking he was reading someone else's letter. He also thought of handing him the letter and describing the young woman who had dropped it. Perhaps he could return it to her? But for some reason not at once clear to him the doctor slipped it into his pocket to take upstairs to read. His arm began to tremble and he felt his heart racing at a rate that bothered him.

After the doctor had got his own mail out of the box—nothing more than the few circulars he held in his hand—Flaherty took him up to the fifteenth floor. Flaherty spelled the night man at 8:00 A.M. and was himself relieved at 4:00 P.M. He was a slender man of sixty with sparse white hair on his half-bald head, who had lost part of his jaw under the left ear after two bone operations. He would be out for a few months; then return, the lower part of the left side of his face caved in, though it was not a bad face to look at. Although the doorman never spoke about his ailment, the doctor

knew he was not done with cancer of the jaw, though of course he kept this to himself; and he sensed when the man was concealing pain.

This morning, though preoccupied, he asked, "How is it going, Mr. Flaherty?"

"Not too tough."

"Not a bad day." He said this, thinking not of the rain, but of the letter in his pocket.

"Fine and dandy," Flaherty quipped. On the whole he moved and talked animatedly and was careful to align the elevator with the floor before letting passengers off. Sometimes the doctor wished he could say more to him than he did; but not this morning.

He stood by the large double window of his living room overlooking the Square, in the dull rainy-day February light, in pleasurable excitement reading the letter he had found, the kind he had anticipated it might be. It was a letter written by a father to his daughter, addressed to "Dear Evelyn." What it expressed, after an irresolute start, was the father's dissatisfaction with his daughter's way of life. And it ended with an exhortatory paragraph of advice. "You have slept around long enough. I don't understand what you get out of that type of behavior anymore. I think you have tried everything there is to try. You claim you are a serious person but let men use you for what they can get. There is no true payoff to you unless it is very temporary, and the real payoff to them is that they have got themselves an easy lay. I know how they think about this and how they talk about it in the lavatory the next day. Now I want to urge you once and for all that you ought to be more serious about your life. You have experimented long enough. I honestly and sincerely and urgently advise you to look around for a man of steady habits and good character who will marry you and treat you like the person I believe you want to be. I don't want to think of you anymore as a drifting semi-prostitute. Please follow this advice, the age of twenty-nine is no longer sixteen." The letter was signed, "Your Father," and under his signature, another sentence, in neat small handwriting, was appended: "Your sex life fills me full of fear. Mother."

The doctor put the letter away in a drawer. His excitement had left him and he felt ashamed of having read it. He was sympathetic to the father and at the same time sympathetic to the young woman, though perhaps less so to her. He tried to study his Greek grammar but could not concentrate. The letter remained in his mind like a billboard sign as he was reading the *Times*, and he was conscious of it throughout the day, as though it had aroused in him some sort of expectation he could not define. Sentences from it would replay themselves in his thoughts. He reveried the young

woman as he had imagined her after reading what the father had written, and as the woman—was she Evelyn?—he had seen coming out of the house. He could not be certain the letter was hers. Perhaps it was not; still, he thought of the letter as though she was the woman he had held the door for, whose perfume still lingered in his senses.

That night thoughts of her kept him from falling asleep. "I'm too old for this nonsense." He got up to read and was able to concentrate, but when his head lay once more on the pillow, a long freight train of thoughts of her rumbled by, drawn by a huge black locomotive. He pictured Evelyn, the drifting semi-prostitute, in bed with various lovers, engaged in various acts of sex. Once she lay alone, erotically naked in bed, her maroon cloth purse drawn close to her nude body. He also thought of her as an ordinary girl with many fewer lovers than her father seemed to think. This was probably closer to the truth. He wondered if he could be useful to her in some way. He then felt a fright he could not explain but managed to dispel it by promising himself to burn the letter in the morning. The freight train, with its many cars, disappeared in the foggy distance. When the doctor awoke at ten o'clock one sunny winter's morning, there was no sense, light or heavy, of his usual depression.

But he did not burn the letter. He reread it several times during the day, each time returning it to his desk drawer and locking it there. Then he unlocked the drawer to read it again. As the day passed he was aware of an unappeased insistent hunger in himself. He recalled memories, experienced intense longing, desires he had not felt in years. The doctor was worried, alarmed by this change in him, this disturbance. He tried to blot the letter out of his mind but could not. Yet he would still not burn it, as though if he did he would shut the door on certain possibilities in his life, other ways to go, whatever that might mean. He was astonished—even thought of it as affronted—that this should be happening to him at his age. He had seen it in others, in former patients, but had not expected it in himself. The hunger he felt, a hunger for pleasure, disruption of habit, renewal of feeling, yet a fear of it, continued to grow in him like a dead tree come to life and spreading its branches. He felt as though he were hungry for exotic experience, which, if he were to have it, might make him forever ravenously hungry. He did not want that to happen to him. He recalled mythological figures, Sisyphus, Midas, who for one reason or another had been eternally cursed. He thought of Tithonus, become a grasshopper living forever. The doctor felt he was caught in an overwhelming emotion, a furious dark wind.

When Flaherty left for the day at 4:00 P.M. and Silvio, who had tight curly black hair, was on duty,

Dr. Morris came down and sat in the lobby, pretending to read his newspaper. As soon as the elevator ascended he approached the letter boxes and quickly scanned the nameplates for an Evelyn, whoever she might be. He found no Evelyns, though there was an E. Gordon and an E. Cummings. He suspected one of them might be she. He knew that single women often preferred not to reveal their first names in order to keep cranks at a distance, conceal themselves from potential annoyers. He casually asked Silvio if Miss Gordon or Miss Cummings was named Evelyn, but Silvio said he didn't know although probably Mr. Flaherty would because he distributed the mail. "Too many peoples in this house," Silvio shrugged. Embarrassed, the doctor remarked he was just curious, a lame remark, but all he could think of.

He went out for an aimless short walk and when he returned said nothing more to Silvio. They rode silently up in the elevator, the doctor standing tall, almost stiff. That night he again slept badly. When he fell deeply asleep a moment his dreams were erotic. He woke with desire mixed with repulsion and lay quietly mourning himself. He felt powerless to be other than he was.

He was up before five and, though he tried to kill time, was uselessly in the lobby before seven. He felt he must find out, settle in his mind, who she was. In the lobby, Richard, the night man who had brought him down, returned to a pornographic paperback he was reading; the mail, as Dr. Morris knew, hadn't come. He knew it would not arrive until shortly after eight but hadn't the patience to wait in his apartment. So he left the building, bought the *Times* on Irving Place, continued on his walk, and because it was a pleasant morning, not too cold, sat on a bench in Union Square Park. He stared at the paper but could not read it. He watched some sparrows pecking at dead grass. He was an old man, true enough; but he had lived long enough to know that age often meant little in man-woman relationships. He was still vigorous and bodies are bodies. He was back in the lobby at eight-thirty, an act of great restraint. Flaherty had received the mail sack and was alphabetizing the first-class letters on a long large table before distributing them into the boxes. He did not look well today. He moved slowly. His misshapen face was gray; the mouth slack, one heard his breathing; his eyes harbored pain.

"Nothin' for you yet," he said to the doctor without looking up.

"I'll wait this morning," said Dr. Morris. "I ought to be hearing from my daughter."

"Nothin' yet but you might hit the lucky number in this last bundle." He removed the string.

As he was alphabetizing the last bundle of letters the elevator buzzed and Flaherty had to go up for a call.

The doctor pretended to be absorbed in his

Times. When he heard the elevator door shut he sat momentarily still, then went to the table and rifled through the C pile of letters. E. Cummings was Ernest Cummings. He shuffled through the G's watching the metal arrow as it showed the elevator beginning to descend. In the G pile there were two letters addressed to Evelyn Gordon. One was from her mother. The other, also handwritten, was from a Lee Bradley. Almost against his will the doctor removed this letter and slipped it into his suit pocket. His body was sweaty hot. This is an aberration, he thought. He was sitting in the chair turning the page of his newspaper when the elevator door opened.

"Nothin' at all for you," Flaherty said after a moment.

"Thank you," said Dr. Morris. "I think I'll go up now."

In his apartment the doctor, conscious of his whisperous breathing, placed the letter on the kitchen table and sat looking at it, waiting for a tea kettle of water to boil. The kettle whistled as it boiled but still he sat with the unopened letter before him. For a while he sat there with dulled thoughts. Soon he fantasied what the letter said. He fantasied Lee Bradley describing the sexual pleasure he had had with Evelyn Gordon, and telling her what else they might try. He fantasied the lovers' acts they engaged in. Then though he audibly told himself not to, he steamed open the flap of the envelope. His hands trembled as he held the letter. He had to place it down flat on the table so he could read it. His heart beat heavily in anticipation of what he might read. But to his surprise the letter was a bore, an egoistic account of some stupid business dealings this Bradley was concocting. Only the last sentence came surprisingly to life. "Be in your bed when I get there tonight. Be wearing only your white panties. I don't like to waste time once we are together." The doctor didn't know whom he was more disgusted with, this fool or himself. In truth, himself. Slipping the sheet of paper into the envelope, he resealed it with a thin layer of paste he had rubbed carefully on the flap with his fingertip. He tucked the letter into his inside pocket and pressed the elevator button for Silvio. The doctor left the building and soon returned with a copy of the afternoon *Post* he seemed to be involved with until Silvio had to take up two women who had come into the lobby; then the doctor thrust the letter into Evelyn Gordon's box and went out for a breath of air.

He was sitting near the table in the lobby when the young woman he had held the door open for came in shortly after 6:00 P.M. He was aware of her cool perfume almost at once. Silvio was not around at that moment; he had gone down to the basement to eat a sandwich. She inserted a small

key into Evelyn Gordon's mailbox and stood before the open box, smoking, as she read Bradley's letter. She was wearing a light blue pants suit with a brown knit sweater-coat. Her tail of black hair was tied with a brown silk scarf. Her face, though a little heavy, was pretty, her intense eyes blue, the lids lightly eye-shadowed. Her body, he thought, was finely proportioned. She had not noticed him, but he was more than half in love with her.

He observed her many mornings. He would come down later now, at nine, and spend some time going through the medical circulars he had got out of his box, sitting on a throne-like wooden chair near a tall unlit lamp in the rear of the lobby. He would watch people as they left for work or shopping in the morning. Evelyn appeared at about half-past nine and stood smoking in front of her box, absorbed in the morning's mail. When spring came she wore brightly colored skirts with pastel blouses, or light slim pants suits. Sometimes she wore very short minidresses. Her figure was exquisite. She received many letters and read most of them with apparent pleasure, some with what seemed suppressed excitement. A few she gave short shrift to, scanned these quickly and stuffed them into her bag. He imagined they were from her father, or mother. He thought that most of her letters came from lovers, past and present, and he felt a curious anguish that there were none from him in her box. He would write to her.

He thought it through carefully. Some women needed an older man; it stabilized their lives. Sometimes a difference of as many as thirty or even thirty-five years offered no serious disadvantages, granted differences in metabolism, energy. There would of course be less sex, but there would be sex. His would go on for a long time; he knew that from the experience of friends and former patients, not to speak of medical literature. A younger woman inspired an older man to remain virile. And despite the heart incident his health was good, in some ways better than before. A girl like Evelyn, probably at odds with herself, could benefit from a steadying relationship with an older man, someone who would respect and love her and help her to respect and love herself more than she perhaps presently did; who would demand less from her in certain ways than some young men awash in their egoism; who would awake in her a stronger sense of well-being, and if things went quite well, perhaps even love for one particular man.

"I am a retired physician, a widower," he wrote to Evelyn Gordon. "I write to you with some hesitation and circumspection, although needless to say with high regard, because I am old enough to be your father. I have observed you often in this building and sometimes as we passed by each other in nearby streets, and I have grown to admire you deeply. I wonder if you will permit me to

make your acquaintance? I wonder if you would care to have dinner with me and perhaps enjoy a film or performance of a play? My intentions, as used to be said when I was a young man, are 'ancient and honorable.' I do not think my company will disappoint you. If you are so inclined—so kind, certainly—to consider this request tolerantly, I will be obliged if you will place a note to that effect in my mailbox. I am respectfully yours, Simon Morris, M.D."

He did not go down to mail his letter at once. He thought he would keep it to the last moment. Then he had a fright about it that woke him out of momentary deep sleep. He dreamed he had written and sealed the letter and then remembered he had appended another sentence: "Be wearing only your white panties." When he woke he wanted to tear open the envelope to see whether he had included Bradley's remark. But when he was thoroughly waked up, in his senses, he knew he had not. He bathed and shaved early and for a while observed the cloud formations out the window. None of them interested him. At close to nine Dr. Morris descended to the lobby. He would wait till Flaherty answered a buzz, and when he was gone, drop his letter into her box; but Flaherty, that morning, seemed to have no calls to answer. The doctor had forgotten it was Saturday. He did not know it was till he got his *Times* and sat with it in the lobby, pretending to be waiting for the mail delivery. The mail sack arrived late on Saturdays. At last he heard a prolonged buzz, and Flaherty, who had been on his knees polishing the brass doorknob, got up on one foot, then rose on both legs and walked slowly to the elevator. His asymmetric face was gray. Shortly before ten o'clock the doctor slipped his letter into Evelyn Gordon's mailbox. He decided to withdraw to his apartment but then thought he would rather wait where he usually waited while she collected her mail. She had never noticed him there.

The mail sack was dropped in the vestibule at ten-after, and Flaherty alphabetized the first bundle before he had to respond to another call. The doctor read his paper in the dark rear of the lobby because he was really not reading it. He was anticipating Evelyn's coming. He had on a new green suit, blue striped shirt, and a pink tie. He

was wearing a new hat. He waited in anticipation and love.

When the elevator door opened, Evelyn walked out in an elegant slit black skirt, sandals, her hair tied with a red scarf. A sharp-featured man with puffed sideburns and carefully combed medium-long hair, in a turn-of-century haircut, followed her out of the elevator. He was shorter than she by a half a head. Flaherty handed her two letters which she dropped into the black patent-leather pouch she was carrying. The doctor thought—hoped—she would walk past the mailboxes without stopping; but she saw the white of his letter through the slot and stopped to remove it. She tore open the envelope, pulled out the single sheet of handwritten paper, and read it with immediate intense concentration. The doctor raised his newspaper to his eyes, though he could still watch over the top of it. He watched in fear.

How mad I was not to anticipate she might come down with a man.

When she had finished reading the letter, she handed it to her companion—possibly Bradley—who read it, grinned broadly, and said something inaudible when he handed it back to her.

Evelyn Gordon quietly ripped the letter into small bits, and turning, flung the pieces in the doctor's direction. The fragments came at him like a blast of wind-driven snow. He thought he would sit forever on his wooden throne in the swirling snow.

The old doctor sat lifelessly in his chair, the floor around him littered with his torn-up letter.

Flaherty swept it up with his little broom into a metal container. He handed the doctor a thin envelope stamped with foreign stamps.

"Here's a letter from your daughter just came."

The doctor, trying to stand without moving, pressed the bridge of his nose. He wiped his eyes with his fingers.

"There's no setting old age aside," he said after a while.

"Not in some ways," said Flaherty.

"Or death."

"It moves up on you."

The doctor tried to say something kind to him but could not.

Flaherty took him up to the fifteenth floor in his elevator. □

MEHITABEL AND THE LAZY LAYABOUT CATS

by Stuart Hemsley

(with apologies to mr marquis)

*The mouse infestation of Warrington, England,
has risen 33 percent—and much of the blame is
due to the family cat, who is a pampered lay-
about, overfed with luxury meals from a can.*

dear boss
mehitabel the cat just came in
with a smile on her face and
curled up by the typewriter and
started to pick her teeth
with a straw from the broom
i said to what do you attribute
this bonhomous conduct question mark
archy she said i just met mabel
the mouse down by the garbage pail
with her tribe of illegitimates
and i talked with them of this and that
archy i did my good deed for today
i disabused them of a grave
groping toward gullibility
mehitabel i said o prolux
one you sound as though you ate
the g page of the dictionary but
tell me more about this good deed
well she said mabel told me how
the mice people had heard on the
radio that over in england the
cats were so well fed on luxury
food that the mice population had
gone up by one third and if they
can do that in england they can
certainly do it here in america
thats what mabel said so i said
to her mabel do not believe
everything you hear from england
even if the sounds are roughly
the same and remember mabel that
when you are in rome you can do
as the romans do but make damn
sure you are in rome when you do it
and then archy rising to my
peroration i went on do not
imagine mabel that a glint of light
is always the coming of dawn
it might be a sodden bum striking
a match to find his way to bed
archy after these homilies
i ate them all up to teach them
a lesson
boss more and more i get to
wondering about mehitabel

archy

CHILDREN IN THE FIELD

by David Rogers

"The children, so young and constant, would have the effect of confronting the soldiers with themselves."



The old French fort was nothing more than an open area encircled by a berm, dirt piled into a wall.

There were gaping holes where the fortification had eroded, and when the ground attack came, the enemy rocket grenades and automatic fire were able to hit the sleeping positions.

Some AK rounds came from an outlying hamlet and Jose opened up with the machine gun. In the morning there was crying from one home, for a child had been killed.

* * *

The women and old men would only stare sorrowfully at the patrols, but the children, looking for food or being curious, would come up to the soldiers.

It was an uneasy truce between them: the infantry sweating under their packs and still wary after coming from the jungle; and the children, pulling on the men's gear, begging for food, but resisting even a gentle hand wanting to touch them.

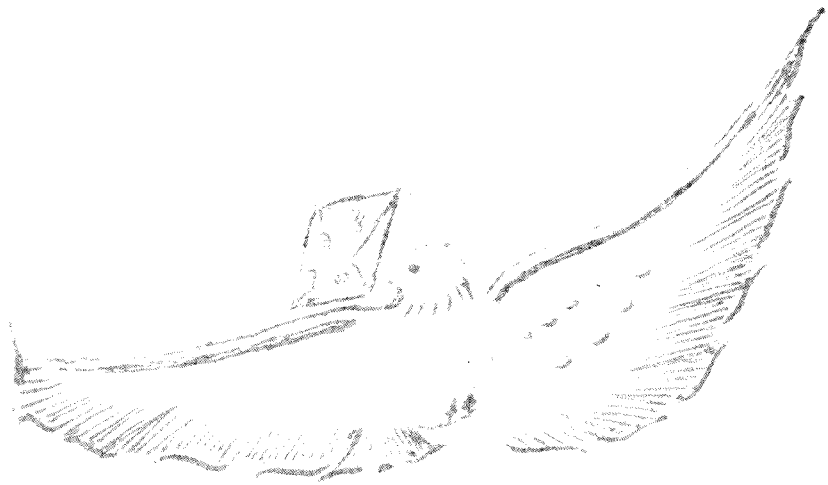
For the platoon medic, breaking through this distance was easier, and the children would finally come to him. He was the only one without a weapon and just the name "Doc" was simpler to remember.

They—the medic and children—never knew each other's real names. It didn't matter.

After all the months in the field and in and out of the villages, many would know him on sight and call "Doc." One would start and then the others would join in. He would want to go back and stay with them.

* * *

The platoon was securing the road when the enemy hit the third squad's position. AK fire caught Wesley in the stomach, and a rocket grenade wounded two other men.



The medic had to go back for them and, afterwards, blood was all over his fatigues and hands.

The children were again on the road, looking where the firing had been. They also looked at him, standing there in the stink of the heat and burned powder and blood.

He wanted them to go away, but they had seen it all before.

It was he who was new. Later, the Vietnamese soldiers would bring their kills out to the road. The children on the way to market would have to pass the bodies.

* * *

She was twelve years old but had a wiser, more reserved way about her than the other children living in the villages or selling sodas along the red clay road.

When candy was thrown from the convoys, she never ran, but only watched out for her younger sister and brother.

The medic always looked for her but never bought the Cokes she teased him with. When the infantry closed the road and no more sodas could be sold, he saw her fishing occasionally or carrying firewood from where the American bulldozers had cleared the jungle.

They seemed better friends then. He brought her presents at Tet, and she gave him paper flowers when he came the next time.

After the battalion moved out, they never saw one another again. Before returning to the United States, he went back to the village, but she was away for the day. Instead, he sat with her brother and sister, who invited him into their thatched home.

The village had a solemn quiet and they talked in near whispers. He stayed an hour with them.

* * *

The children were so light compared to the weight of the Americans that the medics had to be

careful not to turn too quickly when they carried the stretchers from the helicopters.

The thin bodies, smaller still on the green hard canvas, rocked back and forth with each jolt and appeared in danger of sliding off.

One night, two girls were brought in with shrapnel wounds. The youngest lay without a sound, her stomach hard but only slightly torn.

He stayed with her until she went into the operating room, but she did not cry during the long wait.

Just the staring eyes, stunned by the pain and unable to close in the glare of the overhead light.

She had been asleep when the shells came.

In the morning she was dead.

* * *

The children, so young and constant, would have the effect of confronting the soldiers with themselves. Coming back from an operation and seeing them running out to the road, the platoon was faced with something more alive than itself, against which each man would account himself.

The dead in the jungle, those the platoon had lost or those it had killed, would come back for that moment. It was an anxious time, waiting for the smile or shout to pull them through the memories.

* * *

After a contact the soldiers would search the bodies looking for souvenirs or materials which might be turned over to some distant information officer.

Equipment such as hammocks or shell pouches were distributed according to who had been most involved in the fighting. Once there was a picture of the dead man's child and the medic took that himself.

It was a little girl holding a flower and on the back was a delicate sketch of a dove. □

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THE MAKING OF GONE WITH THE WIND

Part II

by Gavin Lambert

From the casting of Scarlett O'Hara to Rhett Butler's "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn," all of David Selznick's actions were based on the idea that any methods were justified to make *GWTW* come out the way he wanted.

Herewith the rest of the story of the filming of a classic, together with some second thoughts about the movie by five contemporary American film critics.

Toward the end of her life, Vivien Leigh turned against Scarlett O'Hara. "I never liked Scarlett. I knew it was a marvelous part, but I never cared for her." She also insisted that she never went after the role, that she believed George Cukor still favored Katharine Hepburn, and that the screen test was only a "lark." By this time, no doubt, she was tired of being haunted by a legend; and she was not well, and not happy. The truth is that she read *Gone With the Wind* in London when it first came out, and was eager for the role. With an intuition and courage that were typical of her, she even thought she would get the part. She once admitted this to me—"Yes, of course I wanted it"—and in 1960, in an interview with the London *Daily Express*, she affirmed: "Everyone said I was mad to try for *Gone With the Wind*, but I wanted it and I knew I'd get it. The only thing I didn't want was the seven year film contract that went with it."

When she went to Hollywood early in December, 1938, it was on a sudden impulse, very Scarlett-like in its mixture of romance and ambition. Laurence Olivier and she were in love, although each was still married to another—Vivien to Dr. Leigh Holman and Olivier to the actress Jill Esmond (who had tested for Hepburn's part in *A Bill of Divorcement*). Vivien was about to start rehearsals for the role of Titania in a production of *A*

Midsummer Night's Dream at the Old Vic, while Olivier had already gone out to California to film *Wuthering Heights*. Both thought of themselves primarily as theater people and were suspicious of Hollywood. Olivier had a personal grudge against the place, having gone there in 1933 to test for the lead opposite Garbo in *Queen Christina* and lost out to John Gilbert. He returned to England and soon became a major star in the theater. When William Wyler, who was going to direct *Wuthering Heights* for Goldwyn, came to London to offer Olivier the part of Heathcliff, the actor at first refused. He didn't want to go back to Hollywood. Then he said he might do it if Vivien could play Cathy; but Merle Oberon had already been cast. Wyler offered her instead the role of Isabella Linton. Vivien turned it down, wanting Cathy or nothing, and Isabella went to Geraldine Fitzgerald.

In spite of his doubts, Olivier found the prospect of Heathcliff irresistible. But he was soon writing unhappy letters to Vivien—he had athlete's foot and was hobbling around on crutches; the film was going very badly; he felt he was not getting any help from Wyler, who gave all his attention to Merle Oberon; and this was naturally affecting his relationship with his leading lady. He implied that she might even walk off the picture. So Vivien went to Hollywood because he was unhappy, and because there seemed a chance that she might play Cathy after all. She was supposed to return within two weeks to start work at the Old Vic, but it was almost two years before she went back to England.

The chance of replacing Merle Oberon did not in fact exist. There were problems at first on *Wuthering Heights*, but if anyone was in danger of losing a part, it was Olivier. Merle Oberon has described to me how, after two weeks of shooting, Sam Goldwyn came on the set and told Wyler and Olivier that he was not satisfied with the actor's performance. He found it too theatrical, and thought Olivier was using an unnecessarily squalid and repulsive makeup for the Heathcliff of the early sequences. As a result, the scenes were reshot and Wyler began devoting most of his attention to

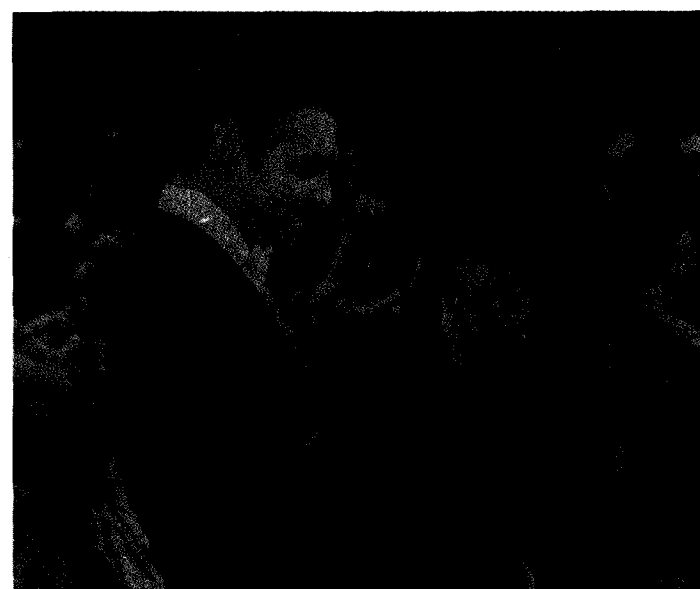
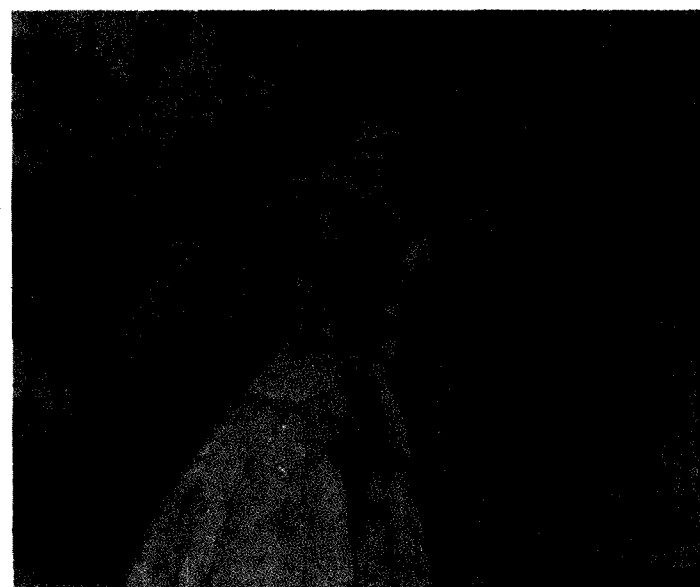
Olivier. In spite of the false start and all the tensions, the actor found his way to an extraordinary performance that made him an international movie star.

No Cathy, then; but Scarlett O'Hara was still not yet cast, and Myron Selznick was Olivier's agent. Vivien had told Olivier how much she wanted the part, and he asked Myron to introduce her to David. At first Myron hesitated; then at the burning of Atlanta the moment suddenly arranged itself. When they met on the platform, David was so electrified by the look of Vivien that he asked her almost at once if she'd like to make a test. She was clever enough to express surprise, then agreed.

The next day Selznick took her to Cukor's office. The director also knew little about her at the time. Although Vivien had become a star on the London stage in *The Mask of Virtue* and had made several films for Korda, British movies in those days had little distribution in the United States; only *A Yank at Oxford*, made by MGM, meant anything at all there. But Cukor liked the look of her too, and with his acute nose for talent felt something "exciting" in her presence. He asked her to read one of the test scenes and was immediately disconcerted by her English accent. "She began reading this thing very sweetly, and very, very clipped. . . . So I struck her across the face with the rudest thing I could say. She screamed with laughter. That was the beginning of our most tender, wonderful friendship." He arranged to shoot a test next day.

In the actress who should play Scarlett, Cukor has said, he was always looking for someone "charged with electricity" and who seemed "possessed of the devil." It is certain that Vivien Leigh was in some way possessed. The exterior was all beauty, grace, manners, charm; beneath it was something neurotic and driven that perhaps she herself never really understood. There was a duality in her nature, as marked as the break in the body of a rock. In a cool, precisely offhand voice she could throw off alarming confidences such as, "I've never slept much, ever. Since I was born, I haven't slept much." There would be no hint of it in her appearance. Although she once said, "I could never find anything of Scarlett in myself," this side of her temperament, the mixture of exquisite control and passionate excess, was very close to the way Margaret Mitchell described her heroine: "The green eyes in the carefully sweet face were turbulent, willful, lusty with life, distinctly at variance with her decorous demeanor." It seems impossible that an actress should have pas-

Top: Signing up for the role of Scarlett. From left to right, George Cukor, Vivien Leigh, David Selznick, Olivia de Havilland, Leslie Howard. Middle: Scarlett and Ashley at the Twelve Oaks barbecue. Bottom: Scarlett and Rhett waltzing at the Atlanta Bazaar.



sionately wanted a part with which she felt she couldn't make personal contact. Although the scheming, shallowly flirtatious aspect of Scarlett was alien to her, she responded very much to something driven and desperate in the character.

Cukor had another actress to test before Vivien that day, and Vivien always remembered that when she got into Scarlett's costume it was still warm. The test was in black and white, and she played two scenes, with Hattie McDaniel as Mammy lacing up her corset for the Wilkes barbecue, and with Leslie Howard as Ashley, when she first declares her love for him during a siesta at the barbecue. A few days later she made a third test—coached in the meantime for a Southern accent by Susan Myrick, known as the “Emily Post of the South,” one of several experts engaged to advise on dialect and manners. This was a later scene with Ashley, soon after the war; Scarlett makes another, even more passionate declaration of love and suggests they run away together.

To see these tests is to witness one of those instantaneous understandings between actress and part. The Southern accent hardly exists in the first two, but it doesn't matter. In every other way Vivien Leigh *becomes* Scarlett, and the boldness and confidence of an actress only twenty-five years old, required to show her grasp of a role with hardly any preparation at all, are extraordinary. In contrast to the others who tested, what is unique and immediately striking is her passion. “There was an indescribable wildness about her,” Cukor remem-

bered later. She is never coy nor tentative nor strained, and instead of playing the first scene with Ashley like a schoolgirl with a crush, she is direct in her desire for him, dangerously impatient. The third test is the most highly charged of all. Within a few days she has basically mastered the Southern accent, which slips away only now and then. Since Howard was not available that day, she is playing with another Ashley, but the woodenness of Douglas Montgomery in no way deters her. Now she presents a woman instead of a girl, hardened by experience, with an underlying panic and desperation; the scene becomes a fierce, disturbing appeal to Ashley to save her life. In fact, the performance here is more striking than when she repeats it in the film under Victor Fleming's direction.

Five days went by after the last test, and she heard nothing. Strangely confident, she cabled Tyrone Guthrie in London, explaining the situation and asking for her release from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was granted. Selznick's delay had nothing to do with the performance. Both he and Cukor were convinced they had found their Scarlett. However, Selznick was worried both by the fact that she was English and—he was remembering the problem with Paulette Goddard—having a love affair with Olivier while both of them were still married. How much public hostility would be created by the announcement that an English actress had been chosen to play Scarlett? “The idea of it seemed outrageous,” Cukor reminisces. Though two of the other leading players were English, presumably Leslie Howard and Olivia de

ANDREW SARRIS: “This Moviest of All Movies”

Gone With the Wind belongs to the ages sort of. Odds are you'll never find it booked as a required film assignment at any of the burgeoning film academies. For one thing it's too long, though at three and three-quarter hours it still seems shorter than the average avant-garde short. Blacks can object justifiably to the shrilly servile hysterics of Butterfly McQueen and even to the once admired but onerously displaced maternal massivity of Hattie McDaniel's Mammy for Vivien Leigh's luminously lily-white Scarlett O'Hara. Highbrows have never been able to bring themselves to admit that they enjoyed all the wheezing windings of *Wind* except on the most furtive level of flick worship. Hence, this moviest of all movies almost never pops up on “serious” all-time Ten Best lists. Indeed, the late Otis Ferguson derided the film (even before he had seen it) as “Clark of Seven Gables” amid complaints that it ran for all of four hours and cost all of four million dollars.

To all this elitist disdain one must counterpose the film's popular mandate around the world as the single most beloved entertainment ever pro-

duced. And “produced” is the operative word here, not “created” or even “directed.” *Gone With the Wind* came out steaming from the crowded kitchen and many cooks of David O. Selznick: two directors (George Cukor and Victor Fleming), a platoon of writers (all but Sidney Howard uncredited), and a cast of thousands. I can never hope to explain to my more serious film students why the gnarled trees and stately mansions of William Cameron Menzies, the morosely melodic score of Max Steiner, and the ineffable beauty and cruelty of Vivien Leigh could cast such a hypnotic spell even on moviegoers who should have known better. It is much, much easier to analyze the antiseptic profundities of *Potemkin* and *Persona* than the infectious banalities of *Gone With the Wind*. Let us say simply that there is something in most of us that will always treasure Selznick's flair for old-fashioned, full-bodied narrative even as we pay lip service to the most anemic forms of cerebration in the modern cinemah. And, ultimately, there is Vivien Leigh's smile on the screen like a sliver of sunlight piercing the heart.

The Making of *Gone With the Wind*

Havilland were thought of as American by having worked in Hollywood for several years. The public's disapproval was far less than feared, anyway, and a threat by the Florida branch of the United Daughters of the Confederacy to boycott the film seemed a small price to pay. On the second score, both Olivier and Vivien assured Selznick that they were filing suits for divorce and intended to get married.

On Christmas Day, 1938, Cukor gave a lunch party at his house. Vivien and Olivier were among the guests. Soon after they arrived, Cukor took Vivien aside and told her the part had been cast. She supposed he meant Hepburn was to play it after all. He shook his head and told her, "I guess we're stuck with you."

There remained a final deal to be made. Selznick bought Vivien's contract from Korda, who told her she was making a foolish mistake. "You are completely wrong for the part. . . ." For the longest leading role in what was to become the longest and most profitable movie ever made in Hollywood, she was paid \$30,000 and would remain under contract to Selznick until 1945. Her mixed reactions, and Cukor as a deciding factor, are evident in the first (January 25, 1939) of several letters she wrote to her husband, with whom she remained on friendly terms:

As you so well realize, I loathe Hollywood and for no other part would I have dreamt of signing a contract. . . . All their standards are financial ones, and I am doing *Gone With the Wind* for them for less money than I have been earning, per picture, for the last two years. The director of the picture was in the theatre for a long time and is a very intelligent and imaginative man and seems to understand the subject perfectly. . . .

From the ashes of Atlanta, under a winter sky, arose the set of Tara, carefully romanticized from Margaret Mitchell's description. A graveled driveway, lined with arching cedars, led past a wide green lawn to the plantation house of whitewashed brick. Trucks arrived with loads of brick dust, mixed into the surrounding earth to make it look Southern red. "From the avenue of cedars to the row of white cabins in the slave quarters," the author had written, "there was an air of solidness, of stability and permanence about Tara. . . ." There was also an air of opulence about its reproduction and, when Selznick sent Margaret Mitchell photographs of it, she privately found it exaggerated. She commented to a friend that she'd always thought of Tara as "upcountry functional," and that she would like to found a society called the Association of Southerners Whose Grandpappies Did Not Live in Houses with White Columns. (Later, when Selznick sent her photographs of the designs for Twelve Oaks, the

Wilkes house, she told the same friend, "I rolled on the floor screaming with laughter.") As for Tara's white columns, Susan Myrick proved her worth early on by pointing out to Selznick that at least they should not be rounded; and the design was corrected to make them square, in the authentic style of the old South rather than of the studio facade.

There was no question of any serious location work in the South; the tradition of Hollywood film-making in the thirties was that you could make everything look better by building a set, and the kind of vast, nostalgic, quintessential evocation of the South that Selznick wanted could only be achieved at the studio. For the fields surrounding Tara, locations were chosen in the San Fernando Valley, its earth again tinted red, and the gardens of a private estate in Pasadena.

At the same time, construction was under way on the sound stages of the interiors of Tara, Lyle Wheeler executing William Cameron Menzies' designs for the sets and Joseph Platt contacting dealers across the country for hundreds of pieces of authentic furniture. Selznick was particularly concerned with the "reality" of these, stressing the importance of aging them, to avoid the usual look of sets and props that had just arrived the night before. Wilbur G. Kurtz, an artist and historian of the South, was retained to check on every matter of detail, and various assistants were employed to verify such things as how horses' tails were cropped at the time and whether oral thermometers were used in hospitals. All the stars were summoned for extensive costume and makeup tests, and another specialist in Southern dialect, Will A. Price, joined Susan Myrick to coach them in accents. On another stage, the building of the set for the Atlanta Bazaar was under way, and Menzies was also preparing a second huge exterior set, the city of Atlanta, with more than fifty buildings and a total of two miles of streets.

With the largest army of studio workers ever assembled for a single movie at his command, specialists of every kind surrounding him, Selznick seemed to have only one major problem left: the script. It was still an unresolved mound: pink, yellow, and blue pages indicating rewrites of the original white; but less than a third of the scenes had been fully worked out and were ready to shoot. For a few days John Van Druten, already rewriting *Intermezzo*, was called in to work on separate scenes; he was followed by Scott Fitzgerald for a few weeks. Instructed like the others to use only Margaret Mitchell's dialogue, Fitzgerald seems to have been the first to caution Selznick that there was already too much of it. He reminded him that in movies "it's dull and false for one character to describe another," and recommended that long speeches, such as Ashley's account to Scarlett of the desperate state of the Confederate army,

should be reduced to a minimum, because the audience had already been shown what he was talking about. Fitzgerald would indicate, too, how an image or the expression on an actor's face could frequently replace dialogue. One scene he was given to rework was the moment when Scarlett watches Melanie and Ashley, recently married, go upstairs to bed. By this time the audience knew that Scarlett was still obsessed with Ashley and jealous of Melanie, but the previous version of the scene again reminded them of it in dialogue. Fitzgerald's "rewrite" was a cutting of most of the lines, and he explained in a note to Selznick: "It seems to me stronger in silence."

Fitzgerald also discovered, rather to his surprise, that Margaret Mitchell's original dialogue was usually better than other writers' reworking of it. Again, there was often too much of it, but vital lines could be extracted to make the point better than any rephrasing. In a letter to his daughter he gave one of the fairest, most relevant estimates of the book as a whole: "... not very original, in fact leaning heavily on *The Old Wives' Tale*, *Vanity Fair*, and all that has been written on the Civil War. . . . But on the other hand it is interesting, surprisingly honest, consistent and workmanlike throughout, and I felt no contempt for it, but only a certain pity for those who consider it the supreme achievement of the human mind."

With Sidney Howard having already pointed out to him the repetitions in the structure, and Fitzgerald now criticizing the dialogue for the same reason, Selznick actually held the key to a re-examination of his troubled script. He himself did not see it that way, however, and used hardly any of Fitzgerald's suggestions; then, disappointed by the writer's failure to come up with some "funny" lines for Aunt Pittypat, he fired him. Being taken off the script was a disastrous blow to Fitzgerald's already shaky confidence. He began the long on-again-off-again drinking bout that led to his final decline and death eighteen months later. Another letter to his daughter, shortly after Selznick fired him, is an ironic valedictory to his unrequited love affair with the movies: "So farewell, Miriam Hopkins, who leans so close when she talks, so long, Claudette Colbert, as yet unencountered, mysterious Garbo, glamorous Dietrich, exotic Shirley Temple—you will never know me. . . ." However, between the drinking bouts and brief assignments on B pictures, he began *The Last Tycoon*. Although unfinished, it remains the most fascinating novel about Hollywood ever written, and sums up his feelings about the Thalbergs and the Selznicks, those enigmatic, power-driven figures whom in spite of everything he wanted to please.

So Fitzgerald's pages joined the mass of others on the shelf, and Selznick showed little concern. He seemed infatuated with the physical creation of a world. Every other element came under painstaking

supervision at this time, and he even sent an SOS to Margaret Mitchell: "How should we tie Mammy's bandana?" (Her answer: "I don't know, and I'm not going out on a limb over a headrag.") Meanwhile, the basic material remained in a state of relative disorganization.

There were other reasons for this, beyond the mania for physical detail, wallpapers, fabrics for petticoats, bandanas. First, Selznick had begun to delude himself that he was a writer, a delusion that was to grow stronger in later years. From the succession of writers after Sidney Howard¹ he had gained a few satisfactory scenes and a few ideas, but in spite of all the other pressures, he found time to rewrite practically all the scenes himself. By now, of course, he regarded the film of *Gone With the Wind* as entirely his own conception, and perhaps it seemed logical to him that he should personally solve every problem. From time to time Cukor would complain about a scene not being ready, and Selznick's response was always the same. He would promise to work all night with one of the writers currently and momentarily on his payroll, and the scene would be perfect in the morning. Not surprisingly, the results failed to justify his promise.

For under the surface the strain was beginning to tell. In an article called "The Great Dictator," Alva Johnston has described Selznick's condition at this time. Not only would he work without sleeping for seventy-two hours at a stretch but, under his doctor's supervision, he had been put on "a daily ration of benzedrine and six or eight grains of thyroid extract—enough to send many a man to heaven. Rather than yield to fatigue, he occasionally left his office at two or three a.m. and went to a gambling house. This was an expensive cure for drowsiness, but after a few hours of roulette he would return to his office refreshed and wide awake, with all the fatigue toxins cleared out of his brain." Johnston also put forward the interesting theory that Selznick developed the habit of dictating memos because he hated to be interrupted while he was talking, and nobody can interrupt a memo. Selznick himself said that he learned the habit from his father, who found dictation the best way of clarifying his thoughts. I think there was by now another reason. At a time when he was undertaking the most ambitious and strenuous work of his career, his expanding ego demanded a consciousness of posterity. He was documenting himself, and taking care that the documents should be preserved. In the same way, after the success of *Gone With the Wind* he ordered his publicity staff to write letters to the editors of all the major ency-

¹Other writers called in for a few days on the script, apart from those already mentioned, were John Balderston, who adapted *The Prisoner of Zenda*; the playwright Edwin Justus Mayer; and Charles MacArthur, the frequent collaborator of Ben Hecht's. The results of their work, if any, remain unknown.

clopedias and reference books that did not yet include his name.

Pushing himself to the edge, propped up by drugs, sleeping irregularly, gambling compulsively, his marriage to Irene Mayer beginning to show signs of crisis (a tricky problem while he was in business with her father), Selznick's control was not as completely secure as it appeared to the world. These tensions account to a considerable extent for his failure to come to terms with the script, and for the other quarrels and emergencies that were to explode throughout much of the shooting.

On January 26, 1939, principal shooting began. The opening studio sequences—Scarlett on the porch at Tara, flirting with the Tarleton twins and complaining about their talk of war, then getting ready for the Wilkes barbecue—were actually the first to be done. (The porch scene was then reshot on Selznick's orders, because he wanted Scarlett to wear a white dress instead of the flowered muslin that she would also wear to the barbecue.) Then, because of the script situation, scenes were scheduled according to whether they already existed in practical form on paper, and according to which sets were ready. Cukor followed the opening with two other episodes taken very literally from the book: the birth of Melanie's child, with Scarlett forcing the hysterical Prissy (Butterfly McQueen) to help her deliver it, and the

incident of the Union deserter who appears at Tara at the end of the war and is shot by Scarlett. After this, he completed the first scene with Gable, when Rhett brings Scarlett the present of a Paris hat. Then he moved to the set of the Atlanta Bazaar, and began the first day's shooting of the ball. At the end of it, when he'd been working on the picture for two and a half weeks, Selznick fired him.

To this day Cukor says he is still uncertain of the reason. He had been Selznick's choice from the first; they had worked together for two years, between other films, making tests and conferring on the script, the design, and all the casting. At the time, it was widely believed that Gable had never wanted Cukor, that he was afraid of his reputation as a "woman's director," and felt the picture would be thrown to Vivien Leigh. Cukor does not accept this. "If that's so, it was very naïve of him and not the thinking of a very good or professional actor. . . . I don't throw anything anywhere at all. There's the truth of the scene and it states itself." The one scene with Gable that he directed, which remains in the picture, certainly shows no favoritism toward Vivien Leigh; on the other hand, both Lee Garmes and Ray Klune have confirmed to me their impression that Gable—who was extremely nervous and tense throughout much of the shooting—was never happy with the choice of Cukor. Their only overt disagreement, in the brief time they worked together, was over the question

STANLEY KAUFFMANN: "The Romantic Is Still Popular"

I can't remember why I saw *GWTW* a second time, in 1960. The first time was the year it came out, 1939. I hope never to see it again: twice is twice as much as any lifetime needs. But it's remarkable that after spending almost eight hours of my existence in front of this film, I can remember only two points vividly. I can kid myself that I remember much discussed moments—the crane shot of the wounded at Atlanta, Hattie McDaniel talking herself down the long stairway, and so on. But what really sticks in my mind is, first, the title itself, floating in with the wind from right to left, one giant billowy letter at a time; and second, a scene among Southern gentlemen near the beginning, before the outbreak of war. Rhett Butler makes a truthful remark about the South's poor chances, and a young hotblood challenges him to a duel. Rhett takes the youth's impetuosity calmly and turns away. Another man tells the gloating youth that his life has just been spared, for Butler is the best pistol shot in the South.

I suppose this means that the film is most significant to me as a "property" and that only one of its cavalier flourishes struck a deep response in my own system of fantasies.

The most interesting way to consider *GWTW* today is in comparison with the film that may eventually surpass it in profits, *The Godfather*. Look at the similarities. Both originated in best-selling American novels. Both are very long. Both are about predators. Both are ultra-American yet are very closely allied to Europe (Walter Scott and Sicily). And, most important, both live within codes of honor, and both codes are romances. William R. Taylor has shown, in *Cavalier and Yankee*, that the "Walter Scott" antebellum South was largely a literary fabrication, concocted at the time, not retrospectively; as for *The Godfather*, our newspapers show us daily that "They Only Kill Each Other" is just another escape hatch to allow us to blink facts. "Us," by the way, means the world, not just the United States, since the whole world flocks to both films.

And that's interesting, too, because it leads to a difference, not a likeness. In a new age, when the "realistic" *Godfather* is packing them in, the romantic *GWTW* is still popular. There's a crumb of comfort in that: at least culture is still more pluralist than some of our propagandists would have us believe.



of a Southern accent, Cukor wanting the actor to attempt a more distinct one; but Selznick interfered, coming down on Gable's side.

Cukor has also said that for the first time in their relationship, even before shooting started, Selznick seemed to trust him less. "He wanted to attend the rehearsals, which I thought unwise. I was the director, after all, and a director should shoot the scene before the producer sees it. . . . And then David started coming down on the set, giving hot tips which weren't really very helpful. He'd never done that before. He changed our methods of working. . . ." In fact, their relationship had changed in other ways since they first worked together. No longer the protégé, Cukor had become a highly successful director without Selznick by the time of *Gone With the Wind*; he had turned down *A Star Is Born*, not wanting to do another Hollywood movie so soon and preferring to direct *Camille* instead, and he had also declined to replace H. C. Potter on *Tom Sawyer*. Selznick had not failed to comment privately, in a memo to one of his company associates, on the problems of "the Cukor situation."

Another clue is provided by Lee Garmes. In an interview with Charles Higham, he remarked, "It wasn't his fault that George was fired. It was David's. . . . All the preparatory work was based on Sidney Howard's script, but when we started shooting, we were using Selznick's. His own material didn't play the same. Cukor was too much of a gentleman to go to David and say, 'Look, you silly son of a bitch, your writing isn't as good. . . .'" Instead, Cukor directed some basically unplayable scenes to the best of his ability, "and no one else wanted to tell the Czar he was wrong." This point is borne out in another letter that Vivien Leigh wrote to her husband.

Pressure from MGM seems to have been an-

Left to right: Melanie and Mammy (Hattie McDaniel) after the death of Scarlett and Rhett's child. Scarlett running to meet her father. Scarlett and Rhett with the remnants of the Confederate Army. Scarlett and the Union deserter.

other factor. First of all, had Gable been unhappy, the studio would have wanted to placate him; and while it was clear from the start that the film would go some way over its original budget of \$2,500,000, Cukor refused to sacrifice the nuances of detail and atmosphere so characteristic of his work. "Look at the scene where Mammy's lacing up Scarlett," Olivia de Havilland said later, "and then at the next one, where Scarlett sits on the stairs eating a chicken leg. There's no other scene in the film with so much detail, such richness—all these were Cukor touches." Yet when Mayer saw the rushes, he expressed doubts. If Cukor paid so much attention to intimate moments, wouldn't he neglect the spectacle, the more commercial aspects of the story? It seems possible that Mayer's reaction revived an ancient doubt in Selznick's mind. Originally he had thought of employing another director for the war sequences, and considered the idea of approaching D. W. Griffith; then, reluctantly, he decided that the old master was not up to it. Also, as Leslie Howard complained in a letter to his daughter, "after seven days' shooting they are five days behind schedule." Much of the delay, however, was caused by Selznick, who not only ordered the porch scene to be reshot but sent down his own revised scenes almost every day.

Just as Cukor never really knew, neither perhaps did Selznick. A joint statement issued to the press on February 13 began as follows: "As a result of a series of disagreements between us over many of the individual scenes of *Gone With the Wind*, we have mutually decided that the only solution is for a new director to be selected at as early a date as is practicable."

Costumed in black, Vivien Leigh and Olivia de Havilland had been rehearsing a scene at the Atlanta Bazaar when the news was brought. They burst into tears and ran over to Selznick's office, where for almost an hour they pleaded with him to change his mind. They said that Cukor had done all the groundwork on their



roles, that he had laid them out in detail; but Selznick remained unyielding.

In fact, although Cukor shot so little of the picture, his imprint continued. After he'd left, de Havilland called him up to ask if she could come over to his house for a few hours on Sundays (there was a six-day week at the time) and, as Cukor puts it, "do some moonlighting." They would run scenes together, and one day the actress asked Cukor if he thought she was wrong to be doing this behind Vivien's back. He told her that he couldn't see why, since Vivien was doing exactly the same thing. Until the end of shooting, in fact, Cukor "ghosted" their performances in this way.

Naturally, production had to close down after Cukor's dismissal, and the episode seemed to confirm a general doubt in Hollywood about the whole project. "The whole town was against us," de Havilland remembers, "and there wasn't a soul in Hollywood who wished us well." And Vivien wrote in another letter to her husband: "He [Cukor] was my last hope of ever enjoying the picture. He was quite right, as the head office suddenly decided that the script (written by one of America's best dramatists) which they had for *two* years wasn't good enough, and started writing one themselves. So you can imagine what the dialogue is like. . . ."

The only member of the cast who appeared unaffected was Leslie Howard. Before shooting started, when he made his costume tests, he realized how much he disliked the prospect of playing Ashley. "I hate the damn part," he wrote to his daughter. "I'm not nearly beautiful or young enough for Ashley, and it makes me sick being fixed up to look attractive." As for the film itself: "Terrible lot of nonsense—heaven help me if I ever read the book." When Cukor left, he evidently agreed with most of Hollywood: "David says he is going to sue me for spreading alarm and despondency."

Gable, naturally, involved himself in the question of Cukor's replacement. MGM wanted his successor to be one of their own contract directors,

and gave Selznick a list of those available: King Vidor, Robert Z. Leonard, Jack Conway, and Victor Fleming. Selznick asked Gable which of these he would prefer, and the actor immediately chose Fleming.

As well as being a "man's director," Fleming had proved himself a highly competent manager of action and spectacle in a variety of films; but he accepted the job with reluctance, and only after pressure from MGM and Gable. Raymond Klune remembers him as a dour man, notably foul-mouthed and anti-Semitic. ("How can you keep on working for all these Jews?" he used to ask him.) Lee Garmes also told me that Fleming had been forewarned of Selznick's habit of rewriting the script, and when he was shown the existing footage, the producer was shocked by his reaction. "David," he said, "your fucking script is no fucking good."

Since nobody had said this before, Selznick felt obliged to make a gesture and agreed to call in a new writer. He turned to his old friend Ben Hecht, a man of occasional though cynical brilliance, famous as a "fixer" of scripts and self-described as "a man of letters with a Hollywood address."

In *A Child of the Century* he tells how Selznick and Fleming arrived at his house on a Sunday morning at dawn. By sunrise, the three of them had reached the studio in Selznick's car, having settled terms on the way. Hecht would be paid \$15,000, and all the work had to be done in a week. Then "four Selznick secretaries who had not yet been to sleep that night staggered in with typewriters, paper and a gross of pencils." Appalled to discover that Hecht had never read *Gone With the Wind*, Selznick decided there was no time to remedy that now. Since Fleming hadn't read it either, the producer himself gave Hecht a verbal summary that lasted an hour. "I had seldom heard a more involved plot. My verdict was that nobody could make a sensible movie out of it. Fleming, who was reputed to be part Indian, sat brooding at his own council fires. I asked him if he had been able to follow the story David had told. He said no."

Hecht then asked Selznick if at any time since he bought the novel a writer had turned this "Ovid-like flight into the Civil War" into a workable screen narrative. Selznick at first seemed doubtful; then, remembering Sidney Howard's first draft, long since buried in revisions, he wondered if it might be worth looking at again. A secretary finally located the original and Selznick read it aloud. "Precise and telling" was Hecht's verdict, and he saw no problem other than reducing its length. For the rest of the week he worked in eighteen- and twenty-four-hour stretches doing exactly that. Believing that food slowed up the creative process, the producer limited their lunches to a snack of bananas and salted peanuts. On the fifth day, in the act of eating a banana, Selznick collapsed and had to be revived by a doctor. On the sixth, a blood vessel burst in Fleming's eye. Hecht conserved his strength by dozing on a couch while Selznick and Fleming acted out the scenes, and at the end of the week he had completed a revised version of the first half. It was a performance of sheer technique, not invention, and he wanted no credit and took none.

Later, Selznick was to play down Hecht's contribution. (He also rewrote it.) He claimed that while Sidney Howard was the only writer who did substantial work on the script, the final structure was 80 percent his own, with the rest conceived by Howard and Jo Swerling.

Once again, this is a matter which cannot be finally settled. However, on the evidence of the fin-

ished film, I would say that 50 percent of its structure is due to none of these writers, but to Margaret Mitchell.

Shooting resumed on March 1, two weeks after Cukor's dismissal. It was quickly apparent that Vivien Leigh's relationship with the new director, like Scarlett's with Rhett, would be contentious. Any successor to Cukor would have had a difficult time endearing himself to her, but with Fleming's open declaration of intentions, "I'm going to make this picture a melodrama," she prepared for battle. Nor was she pleased when he immediately nicknamed her "Fiddle-de-Dee." There were to be few moments, in fact, when she wasn't complaining about Selznick's dialogue and the way Fleming expected her to play it. Selznick described later how she would mutter under her breath before a take and make "small moans." Nevertheless she was always polite and professional; they arrived at a workable truce and a grudging respect for each other.

At first Vivien Leigh had felt deeply discouraged, faced on the one hand with Fleming, a man she considered an expert but simpleminded technician replacing an artist, a "poor wretch" who never had time even to read the book, and on the other with the leviathan of Selznick; but in spite of being so young and unknown, she tackled both with a coolly virulent determination. In her loyalty to Cukor's conception of the role, and in her argu-

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR.: "Time, alas, has treated *GWTW* cruelly."

Hollywood films tend to age well. What at the time may have seemed journalistic or cheap often displays after the passage of years an unexpected depth and dignity. Like other artifacts, films acquire a patina. But time, alas, has treated *GWTW* cruelly. It seems even worse now than when I saw it in 1939.

I am not referring to the obvious ideological issues. There is no more point in condemning *GWTW* for reproducing the stereotypes of its day—for its attitudes toward blacks and women, for its idealization of slavery and its caricature of Reconstruction—than there is in condemning *The Birth of a Nation* for admiring the Ku Klux Klan. *GWTW* fails rather on its chosen ground. It has an epic theme: the downfall of a brave, haughty, and obtuse ruling class against a backdrop of war and social upheaval. But it loses the theme in a morass of unconvincing sentimentality. It aspires to opera and achieves soap opera.

The public moments in the first half still have a sweep and vigor: the panic of flight along dusty roads; Atlanta under siege and in flames; the great long pull-away shot of the Confederate wounded ly-

ing in the city square. The second half should have been haunted by Reconstruction as the first was by war. Instead the private drama takes over.

And how badly written it is! There is hardly a sharp or even a credible line. It is picture-postcard writing, as it is picture-postcard photography (and, for that matter, picture-postcard music). Melanie and Scarlett, the women's-serial rewrite of Amelia Sedley and Becky Sharp, are too much: one too good to be true, the other too wicked. As Ms. Scarlett, Vivien Leigh gives a thin and shallow performance. She does not enrich the part by the slightest idiosyncrasy or originality. It is far more external and far less interesting as a rendition of a Southern bitch than Bette Davis' Jezebel or Miriam Hopkins' Temple Drake. Olivia de Havilland and Leslie Howard are beyond belief. Only Clark Gable, though one wearies of the knowing smile with which he monitors Scarlett's escapades, triumphs over the banal lines through a pleasantly cynical conception of the role and a hard, florid masculinity.

Perhaps in another thirty years *GWTW* may acquire its patina. For the moment, at least to this unregenerate viewer, it is a bore.

ments with Selznick about the script, she became a creative influence on the picture far beyond the usual limits of an actress. On the surface, de Havilland was pliant, while secretly conferring with Cukor; Gable and Fleming were old friends; Leslie Howard was bored and given to flubbing his lines; it was left to Vivien to speak her mind, which she began to do with a courage and passion that must have astonished Selznick. ("No Pollyanna," he would sigh when describing her.) Every day she would arrive on the set with a copy of the novel in her hand, as evidence that the original was superior to the rewrites, and also "to look up each scene as we filmed it, to remind myself where I was supposed to be, and how I should be feeling—until Selznick shouted at me to throw the damned thing away." Without the book and without Cukor, she said, she would never have been able to get through. But there was also her own strength, and the self-discipline that de Havilland called "not harsh, but of an exquisite order." She had wanted the part, she had started with great hopes, and was determined not to lose out now. "She gave something to that film," de Havilland has commented, "which I don't think she ever got back."

With Gable her relations were polite but formal. He was Fleming's friend, and therefore on the opposite side; also, the two men had much in common. One of the great screen personalities of his time, Gable never lost a fear that his private self might be revealed. Cast as the male conqueror, adored for it, he was in life sexually cautious, and, until he met Carole Lombard, drawn to older women. In his early career as an actor in touring companies, he played with several distinguished, middle-aged, and lecherous ladies of the theater. Both Alice Brady and Jane Cowl tried unsuccessfully to seduce him; Pauline Frederick got as far as persuading him to rub her back after the performance. Even though he complained that she looked at him as if she never expected to see another man in her life, his first two marriages were to women considerably older than himself. "You know I love Pappy," Lombard once remarked after their marriage, "even though he's not the greatest lay." And for years it was a closely guarded studio secret that he wore false teeth.

Anxious to improve himself as an actor, Gable was equally anxious that no one should know that he needed to improve. Self-consciousness haunted him, diffidence held him back. If a director stopped him in the middle of a take, he had to go back to the beginning and get into the scene all over again. Over the years he struggled to acquire technique. At MGM this was well known, and his screen personality would be carefully built up to exploit all that was appealing in him, roles chosen that gave him the fewest problems, directors found

who knew how to relax him best. He was happiest in scenes of action and wisecracking, when he had to threaten sexuality rather than demonstrate it, and the part of Rhett Butler was the first in which he knew he'd have to explore himself. Vivien quickly sensed his nervousness, and ironically the newcomer found herself reassuring the famous star. Impressed but wary, he withdrew to the camaraderie of Fleming. There was no one else in the company that he really trusted. He was tense when he began the picture—the role intimidated him and his divorce case was coming to court in a few weeks' time—and he was also a naturally suspicious man. Selznick noted that on several occasions the actor had accused him of trying to "do him in."

It seems likely that the relationship of Vivien and Gable outside the film contributed something important to their scenes together. In the novel, Rhett is amused by Scarlett because he knows that her airs and graces conceal a very hard, level head; he is physically attracted to her, and he knows that in spite of her denials she feels the same way toward him. In the film, something more happens. For the first time, Rhett is confronted by a woman as strong as himself, and there are moments when you detect a guarded, almost rueful quality beneath the swagger. (It was there in all of Gable's performances.) Each has called the other's bluff, and the marriage develops into a fluctuating struggle for power. When Rhett walks out, he is confessing in a way that he has lost. The resonance comes from their personal chemistry as performers.

The most difficult scene for Gable to play, in the picture and in his whole career, was when Melanie breaks the news to Rhett of Scarlett's miscarriage. The facade of the man dissolves. "Melanie had never seen a man cry and of all men, Rhett, so suave, so mocking, so eternally sure of himself." The idea seemed as chilling to Gable as it did to Melanie. He pleaded with Fleming to have the scene rewritten, or to cheat it, not to make him play it, even threatening to walk off the picture and give up his career. One of the reasons that Gable liked Fleming was that he always seemed to defer to the star; to the others he would give orders, but to Gable he would say, "Do you think we can try it this way?" Fleming discussed the problem with Selznick first, and the producer partially relieved Gable by promising to shoot the scene two ways: with tears, and with an eloquently turned back. Then, privately, Fleming suggested to Gable that the tears would be much better; they would not destroy his image, as he feared, but would increase the audience's sympathy for the character. He shot the dry-eyed version first, and then—after a last protest from the star—the weeping. The weeping was used, of course, and on the screen shows no strain or hesitation. Even though

he never attempted anything as complex before or afterwards, Rhett remains the part with which Gable is most identified. Fleming's most important contribution to *Gone With the Wind* was his personal knowledge of the actor, and his ability to release him from his fears.

Three weeks after shooting was resumed, another important head fell. Lee Garmes was conferring with William Cameron Menzies on an elaborate scene in which Scarlett makes her way through the hundreds of Confederate wounded at the Atlanta railroad station. Like many other spectacular moments, it was to be executed under Selznick's close supervision. He had demanded 2500 extras for the soldiers, an unheard-of number in those days, and the Screen Extras Guild had only 1500 available. Seizing the opportunity to save money, Selznick ordered 1000 dummies to swell the crowd, insisting that the trick be kept a secret. He also wanted the camera placed on a high crane able to rise a hundred feet above the ground to follow Scarlett. No studio had a crane large enough, and the shot was postponed until Ray Klune had the idea of borrowing one from a construction company, and then of building a concrete ramp so that the camera's smoothness of movement when mounted was assured. Rehearsals for this took several days, with a specially detailed additional crew. By the time everything was ready, Garmes had been taken off the picture, because Selznick had decided that his use of color was too "neutral."

"We were using a new type of film," Garmes has explained, "with softer tones, softer quality, but David had been accustomed to working with picture-postcard colors. He tried to blame me because the picture was looking too quiet in texture. I liked the look; I thought it was wonderful. . . ." According to the Technicolor adviser, Ray Rennahan, Garmes's lighting was "softer" and "flatter" than the style Selznick wanted; Rennahan's own preference was for more sharpness, and he recommended a cameraman, Ernest Haller, who fortunately was ready to take over at a day's notice; so this changeover was made without any loss of time. Haller had never done a color film before, but with Rennahan's guidance he achieved a greater "definition," and Selznick was pleased with the result. But the difference in style was far less than might have been expected.

The next major crisis occurred a month later. By the middle of April, Selznick was worried by what he described as Victor Fleming's physical and mental exhaustion. Fleming's doctor had assured him there was no cause for alarm, and until April 26 the director continued to work efficiently on the film, though his moods alternated between an almost despairing energy and violent explosions of

rage. After another disagreement with Vivien while rehearsing, he threw down his script, walked out of the studio, and drove home to Malibu. Next day it was reported that he had had a nervous collapse and had told his wife he'd contemplated suicide, wanting to plunge his car over a cliff.

Selznick contacted his doctor and learned that the breakdown was feigned; Fleming was certainly tired and angry, but not in the least a hospital case. According to Klune, it was decided to withhold the information from the rest of the company. Fleming's sudden theatrical gesture was a protest against what he considered David's domination of the picture. From the time that he took over, the continuity girl was under orders from Selznick to report any deviation on the set from the shooting plan or the script. Fleming received constant memos about his use of color (comparing it unfavorably to the color in *The Garden of Allah*), about padding Vivien's bosom (referred to as "the breast-work situation"), and about the costumes. Fleming's request for the schedule to be rearranged so that he could shoot in continuity was refused; Selznick told him it was impossible to keep Gable on the payroll doing nothing. Probably the peak of his irritation was reached after Selznick had screened *The Great Waltz*, an MGM picture about Johann Strauss credited to Julien Duvivier, but for which Fleming had shot some major sequences. Highly impressed with its technique, Selznick asked the director why his work on *Gone With the Wind* was so much less remarkable. Fleming blamed the cumbersome Technicolor equipment, explaining that on a black-and-white movie he had far more flexibility with camera angles. In all these confrontations Fleming was the loser; he finally threw a tantrum and converted it into a breakdown, under the false impression that Selznick would promise to reduce the pressure if he came back.

Discussing the situation with Klune, the producer said that the best way to get Fleming back would be to replace him. A feigned breakdown made the crisis no less severe, and it was imperative that shooting should not be closed down again. Klune suggested Sam Wood, who had just finished *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* in England and was now in New York. Over the long-distance phone he accepted the assignment, and began working three days later.

Perhaps the fact that Wood had once worked as assistant to Cecil B. De Mille led Selznick to believe that he could tackle a story of this size. Up to this time, all of Sam Wood's movies had been remarkable for their complete lack of visual appeal. No doubt Selznick relied on Menzies to take care of this, and an interesting minor footnote to film history follows. Wood came under the spell of Menzies, and a year later they worked together on *Our Town*, then on two very stylish period pieces, *Kings Row* and *Ivy*. Throughout the forties, in fact,

the movies directed by Sam Wood acquired an elaborate visual surface. Before *Gone With the Wind* his work had no personality, though his direction of actors was competent; but afterwards it at least had some visual distinction.

In relation to *Gone With the Wind*, the minor footnote clinches a major point. From the time that Sam Wood took over, Selznick became explicitly the creator of the film, in all but name its director and writer as well as producer. The machine he had built for this purpose now operated for him alone. Actors excepted, it had no irreplaceable parts. If a cameraman failed to deliver the hoped-for images, if a director temporarily threw up the sponge, it became simply a matter of calling for a new component. For the rest of his life Selznick was to approach film-making in this way, and his later projects were notorious for the clashes with directors and technicians, the numbers of scenes rewritten and reshot. It explains Cukor's remark that *Gone With the Wind*, in spite of its success, contained the seeds of Selznick's destruction. Creating it, he was at the same time taking the first steps toward destroying himself. Convinced that his talents were protean, he was able on this one occasion to stretch them to extraordinary limits; but he drew the wrong conclusion when he believed it could happen again.

Fleming "recovered" after two weeks, and it is characteristic that Selznick brought him back while still retaining Sam Wood. He had devised an elaborate system to make up for lost time: he placated Gable by promising him that none of his scenes would be directed by Wood; he persuaded Vivien and the other princi-

pals to work for both directors as the schedule demanded; he stepped up the number of second units for incidental shots to five, and entrusted Menzies with two major sequences as well as several linking passages. Amazingly, there is no disparity in styles in the resulting scenes. Not only were Fleming and Wood in effect working as megaphones for Selznick, but Menzies now coordinated the visual aspects of every sequence even more closely, and the memos continued to arrive whenever Selznick heard that one of his directors had changed a camera setup. In this way, displacements of personnel could not affect the look and construction of the whole. The only variable could have been the actors, frequently informed what age they would be playing only twenty-four hours beforehand; but they not only survived, they never lost faith. The greatest burden fell on Vivien Leigh and Olivia de Havilland, who would find themselves week after week shooting a scene for Sam Wood in the morning, then moving to Fleming's set for an episode several years later (or earlier) in the afternoon. Vivien said later that she had "no time to let worry get the upper hand. I lived Scarlett for almost six months from early morning till late at night." Olivia de Havilland has told me that she remembers "very little sense of dislocation, because of David Selznick's astonishingly unifying influence." She never doubted that they were making "something special, something which would last forever."

It could only have been Selznick who enabled Sam Wood to pass a difficult test, winning approval from the actors on the first scene he directed. This was at night, de Havilland recalls, on the back lot, after dinner, "the moment when Vivien and I come out of the church and are ac-

JUDITH CRIST: "Glorious Excesses"

The difference is, of course, that thirty years later, as with all things, one squints the eye a little, puts all thoughts of the purity of its kitsch aside, and consciously relaxes before being swept up in all the glorious excesses of *Gone With the Wind*, undoubtedly still the best and most durable piece of popular entertainment to have come off the Hollywood assembly lines.

One is still swept up and one wallows (of course in a nostalgic glow) in the pace, the variety of scenes and personalities, the enriched and particularized stereotypes, and the somehow archetypal clichés which only that moviemaking rarity, a showman with taste and intelligence, could have produced out of Margaret Mitchell's total diminution (intellectual as well as structural) of *War and Peace*. For my moviegoing generation, the Russians' 1968 433-minute film of the Tolstoy work certainly underlined its Americanization and min-

imization by Selznick et al—but until then certainly *GWTW* stood as *our* spectacular.

And therefore there's generational nostalgia, recall of an adolescent wonder at the opulence of cinematic magic (how the liberal-intellectual critics of that day scorned the \$4-million cost and the publicity attendant on the star selection—while in our critical day we scarce batted an eye at Cleopatra's \$40 million and its star shenanigans!), scorn of today's lack of glamour and superstars (and who's around to beat the Gable-Leigh-Howard-de Havilland combo, with a supporting cast that would merit stardom in today's talent-scarce market?), and wonderment at the relative realism of character amid the mush-mouth Southernisms and Civil War Weltschmerzisms.

All that glows. But so does the film, because it's the stuff our movie dreams were made on—and mighty durable stuff it proves to be.

costed on its steps by Belle Watling. I liked that scene, and thought it went well, and was relieved to see that the new hand would guide us wisely." There was also a debt of which Wood was probably unaware; both actresses had been fortified by discussing the scene beforehand with Cukor.

GWTW: VITAL STATISTICS

Preparation period: 250,000 man-hours.

Production period: 750,000 man-hours. Burning of Atlanta filmed December 10, 1938. Principal photography begun January 26, 1939; concluded July 1, 1939. (Shooting was closed down for twelve days after Cukor left the picture.)

Footage: 449,512 feet of film shot; 160,000 printed. Final running time: 20,300 feet (222 minutes). Approximate ratio of film shot to film used: 20 to 1.

Cast: 59 leading and supporting characters, 2400 extras. Supporting characters, from Hattie McDaniel down, paid a total of \$10,000.

Animal extras: 1100 horses and 375 assorted pigs, mules, oxen, cows, and dogs.

Vehicles: a total of 450 wagons, ambulances, and gun-caissons.

Design: William Cameron Menzies, with McMillan Johnson, created 3000 sketches covering all the major scenes in the film and designed 200 sets; 90 sets actually built, executed by Lyle Wheeler and using 1 million feet of lumber.

Wardrobe: 5500 separate items created by Walter Plunkett. Total cost: \$153,818. Laundry cost during shooting: \$10,000.

Set dressing: 34 carpet designs, 36 wallpaper designs, hand-painted, and for the scene of the Atlanta Bazaar alone, 10,000 manufactured articles.

Actual production cost: \$3.7 million. Total cost, with added overheads of prints, publicity, et cetera: \$4.25 million. Of this, \$1.25 million invested by MGM, the rest by backers of Selznick International.

Gross on the world market: to date approaches \$120 million. It has not yet been shown on television.

Leslie Howard was also to find himself under pressure. Contracted to star in *Intermezzo* as well as become its associate producer, he was now requested to play two roles simultaneously. The starting date of *Intermezzo* could not be delayed even though *Gone With the Wind* was behind schedule; having disagreed with the original director, William Wyler, over the script, Selznick had now lined up Gregory Ratoff to replace him. Howard accepted the situation with his usual detached whimsy, remarking to Klune that he didn't mind being given only fifteen minutes to switch roles, but would have liked more time for the costume change.

During all these months of tense and upstream work, Selznick the autocrat was not the only key figure. There was also Selznick the personal charmer and enthusiast, magnetic and, in spite of everything, irresistible. Even those upon whom the axe fell displayed surprisingly little bitterness—Garmes worked for him again, and Cukor was to remain friends with him. "He treated us with such appreciation," de Havilland remembers. "At the end of every week you'd find a packet of eight-by-ten glossy stills of the scenes you'd worked on waiting in your dressing room. You'd do anything for a man like that. . . ." The six-foot-one figure with ponderous frame and rather clumsy movements was a genuine source of wonder. Whatever he did had an aura of such conviction that it seemed curiously innocent. In a sense it was, since all his actions were based on the very simple idea that any methods were justified to make *Gone With the Wind* come out the way he wanted. The hostility of the industry in general now worked in his favor. "Turkey" and "bust" and "white elephant" and "Selznick's folly" were the favorite epithets, and they had the effect of intensifying the loyalty of his actors and technicians. When he remarked, "There's only room for one prima donna on this lot, and that's me," they not only knew it to be true but savored the jovial confidence with which he said it. They also learned that the unceasing notes of complaints, the hesitations and endless rewriting, reflected a desire to extract the best from himself and others. According to Garmes, while David thought he knew what he wanted, he frequently had trouble recognizing it when brought to him; according to Klune, even when satisfied he wondered whether there might not be a better way of doing it. Taken together, these comments add up to a very workable definition of a perfectionist.

In the photographs of Selznick from his youth to his early sixties, there is one constant: his smile. Lighted by pleasure, the face suddenly belongs to a small boy. The moment of triumph appears to astonish him. It is the mark of the true showman to be able to amaze himself, and the dismissals, frictions, and breakdowns all became unimportant

when he viewed the footage that had been shot each day and, like God creating the world, finally saw that it was good.

On June 27, Fleming shot the last scene of the picture, the first that Margaret Mitchell had actually written. It did not exist in script form until the day before. The problem of how to convey that Scarlett, after Rhett leaves her, still believes she can get him back and realizes that even if she doesn't, she can always return to Tara, had defeated every writer. Selznick came up at the last moment with the idea of Scarlett addressing another soliloquy to the camera, speaking lines selected from the novel's inner monologue, added to which would be the disembodied voices of her father and Ashley reminding her of "the red earth of Tara." The producer records that "it was pretty loudly jeered at on paper," but that preview audiences found it gave the ending "a tremendous lift." They missed, however, Rhett's final line, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn," which was to become one of the most quoted in the film, like Scarlett's "I won't think about it today, I'll think about it tomorrow." It seems incredible now that the line was permitted only after months of negotiation with the Hays office, but at that time the word "damn" was completely taboo. In his original draft Sidney Howard changed the line, after consultation with Selznick, to "Frankly, my dear, I don't care." The scene was shot both ways, but it was not until the end of November—after Selznick's repeated pleas that he'd be unmercifully mocked for omitting the famous phrase and that the dictionary definition of the terrible word was no worse than "a vulgarism"—that the censors finally granted permission.

In the novel, Rhett's line is "My dear, I don't give a damn," but Howard's added "Frankly" was left in, a minor yet incalculable improvement that would probably never have occurred by design.

By July 1, some last scenes with bit players had been completed, and shooting was officially over. Vivien's departure for New York was delayed by Selznick, who wanted yet another retake on the opening porch scene. It still dissatisfied him, though he couldn't say why. Then, gazing at Vivien's face, he exclaimed, "My God, you look old!" "You'd look old, too," she answered, "if you'd been working eighteen hours a day for weeks on end." She was too indignant to notice that by the end of shooting Selznick's black curly hair had become faintly streaked with gray.

In the last week of August, Vivien returned for

Top: Beginning of the crane shot, with Scarlett searching for a doctor at the railroad depot. Middle: Melanie after childbirth, with Rhett and Scarlett. Bottom: Party at the Atlanta opening. Left to right: Olivia de Havilland, Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, David Selznick.



the retake. Seven months older, but looking sixteen again, Scarlett is back on the summery porch in innocent white. This time Sam Wood directed the scene on one of those perfect untroubled afternoons that ought to last forever, and Scarlett refused to believe the talk of war. Next day, the actress joined Olivier on Ronald Colman's yacht. Over the Labor Day weekend, time was suspended just as it was on the porch at Tara. Then they heard on the radio that England had declared war on Germany.

Shooting completed, Selznick moved on with his usual relentless energy. By early September, he had trimmed forty-five minutes from the first cut, and the film had found what was to be its final length. Max Steiner was already at work on the music.

Selznick liked to saturate his pictures with music and he liked the music sweepingly romantic. "If you will just go mad with schmaltz in the last three reels . . ." Selznick suggested—but in fact the composer gave him incessant and richly textured sounds throughout. Following his usual practice of writing "themes"—one for Scarlett, one for Rhett, one for Melanie and Ashley, and so on—he came up with a notable winner in "Tara," a luxuriously orchestrated variation on the song, "My Own True Love." Much of the rest was skillfully compiled from Civil War songs, "Marching Through Georgia," "Dixie," "The Bonnie Blue Flag," and various Stephen Foster tunes. Quintessential Hollywood "prestige" music, the score fits Selznick's conception perfectly, narcotic, quivering, or rousing as occasion demands.

The first two previews were held in Santa Barbara and Riverside at the end of September, a few days apart. In both cases procedure was basically the same. The title of the movie, as usual, was not divulged in advance; at Santa Barbara, before the curtains parted, the theater manager told the audience it was about to see a "very special" picture, and that no one would be allowed to leave once it had started. Guards were posted in the lobby throughout the screening, for Selznick didn't wish any word of the preview to leak out to the press. The manager also informed the audience that the picture would run longer than usual, and proclaimed a delay of fifteen minutes before it started, so that his patrons could telephone families and baby-sitters from the guarded lobby, warning them of a late return home.

When the main title came on the screen, there were excited gasps and cheers. Many people rose to their feet and applauded, as they did at the end, an uninterrupted three hours and forty-five minutes later. Selznick was moved to tears by the enthusiasm. At Riverside he took the stage personally to introduce the picture; and with the same procedure, on a sweltering night, there were no complaints about the length. Selznick described the re-

actions on the preview cards as "probably the most amazing any picture has ever had." It was here that he won his case for an intermission: he had a member of his staff check how many people, and how often, left during the movie for the patrolled rest rooms. Activity was intense enough for the point to be taken.

Now that the discarded footage of *Gone With the Wind* no longer exists, it is impossible to know exactly what was lost in the cutting room between the first MGM screening and the final version shown at the previews. The surviving script material provides no clue. Apart from Sidney Howard's first draft, too rough to be conclusive, and Fitzgerald's pages (discovered in the Princeton Library by Aaron Latham when he wrote *Crazy Sundays*, his book about Fitzgerald in Hollywood), there remains only the so-called "final" shooting script dated January 24, 1939.

It is said that an assistant editor, angered by the cuts, made off secretly with all the discarded scenes, which are preserved in a remote suburb of the San Fernando Valley. The quest for these promised riches has been no more successful than the search for the Maltese Falcon.

The date of the Atlanta premiere was fixed for December 15, 1939. As usual, Selznick's preparations were fastidiously detailed. MGM, as the releasing company, was officially in charge of the ceremonies, but memos, often in cable form, would arrive at the house of their publicity director, Howard Dietz, day and night: I WANT YOU TO BE VERY CAREFUL OF THE PAPER YOU SELECT FOR THE PROGRAM—STOP—SOMETIMES THEIR CRACKLING NOISE MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO HEAR THE DIALOGUE—STOP—PROMISE YOU WILL ATTEND TO THIS.

Almost a million people poured into the city. They knew they had no hope of getting seats for the premiere, but were hungry for a glimpse of the stars. The Governor of Georgia proclaimed the day of the opening an official state holiday, and the Mayor of Atlanta arranged three days of parades and celebrations, urging his citizens to wear period costumes in the streets. Old hoopskirts and beaver hats were enthusiastically dusted off. The facade of the Grand Theater was fronted with false pillars, to resemble Twelve Oaks. Since it seated only 2500, tickets (at \$10 a head) were at a premium. Besieged by important constituents who would be useful at the next election, the mayor begged MGM for help; he was luckier than the Daughters of the American Revolution, whose representative was turned down because the movie was about a different war. In the last hours before the opening, scalpers were demanding as much as \$200 a ticket. Among those invited, apart from the governor and mayor and their entourages, were

governors of seven other Southern states; Herbert Hoover; Elsa Maxwell; Thomas Mann; the Billy Roses; the Averell Harrimans; an impressive roster of East Coast wealth including Jock Whitney, family groups of Whitneys and Vanderbilts, Nelson Rockefeller, J. P. Morgan, and John Jacob Astor; and, of course, Margaret Mitchell.

The most notable absentees were Leslie Howard and Victor Fleming. Since the outbreak of war in Europe, Howard had been anxious to return to England; he left Hollywood at the end of August. Fleming had now been totally alienated by the advance publicity, in which Selznick was quoted as saying that all the directors on *Gone With the*

Wind had been "supervised" by himself. The producer blamed this on the MGM publicity department, but Fleming declined even to discuss it. The breach between the two men became complete, one of the rare cases in which Selznick failed to heal a professional disagreement on the personal level. Not even Gable could persuade Fleming to go to Atlanta, or any of the other openings. The Hollywood celebrities traveled in separate planes. Selznick was accompanied by his wife, Myron, Vivien Leigh, Laurence Olivier, and Olivia de Havilland; Gable and Carole Lombard joined a group of MGM executives on a plane with *GONE WITH THE WIND* painted in huge letters on the side of its

RICHARD SCHICKEL: "Glossy, Sentimental, Chuckle-headed"

One measure of a movie's quality is to ask yourself what you retain from it years after seeing it. The answer, for me, for *Gone With the Wind* is—"not much": Gable busting down Scarlett's door (and his walkout at the end), that great pullback revealing the wounded stretched out as far as the lens can see in the Atlanta station, and . . . and . . . little else. The things that make memorable less prestigious movies that I saw around the same time—unforgettable imagery, dialogue that forever implants itself in mind—are simply not present in *GWTW*.

Nor does it satisfy my other rule of thumb about popular art (we do understand, don't we, that we are not discussing Capital A Art?), which is the strength of one's desire to see the thing again. In my case, it is minimal. To be sure, I was too young to be infected by the mass fervor that Margaret Mitchell's novel generated, and I missed out on Selznick's great publicity gimmick, inviting the public to make known its notions for casting the leads. Still, by the time I saw the film in re-release in the late forties, it had become a legend as Hollywood's longest, costliest, most successful sound movie (the silent *Birth of a Nation* may have outgrossed it; the records for it are in disarray), so my expectations were very positive. And, on the whole, I thought the picture was OK.

But no more than that. Why? Well, frankly, my dear, I didn't (and don't) give a damn about the South's yokel notion that it once supported a new age of chivalry and grace. The historical evidence for that contention is slight, and even if such an age had actually flowered, it had no place in America. So I never could join Miss Mitchell in mourning the era gone with her wind, which seemed to me far from an ill wind.

Worse, the movie itself seemed to me curiously lifeless—mostly talk, and very flowery talk at that. That, I think, is because it reflected not an artist's sensibility but a producer's. Selznick's recently published memos reveal him obsessed with making

a film as literally faithful to the novel as possible, and to this end he platooned screenwriters in and out of the project, nudging and fussing over the script, motivated, it would seem, less by any very expansive vision of what the finished work might be than by fear that the public would reject it if he tampered too extensively with their beloved trash. Along the way George Cukor, a good director whose gifts were such that he might have made something strong and genuine out of the emotions afloat in this property, was replaced by the cruder Victor Fleming. Selznick, whose devotion to literacy was largely self-proclaimed (in Hollywood in those days anyone who could read more than two pages without straining was like the one-eyed man in the blind kingdom) and belied by a career-long devotion to talky kitsch drawn from such mighty pens as those of Niven Busch, Robert Nathan, or in his own stable, Ben Hecht, busied himself with his insufferable memos, fretting over such trivia as sets, costumes, and makeup and guaranteeing that men of independence would not stay long at his side. The result was a film entirely worthy of its source—glossy, sentimental, chuckle-headed—not one that would transcend, as have so many that have been pulled from literature's bottom drawers, the original work.

Selznick was intelligent enough to see that success depended on a sober acceptance of the popular notion that *GWTW* was a serious, important work. But there were many in the town then who could have managed that just as uncynically as he did. And some of them were capable of making movies that were what *GWTW* never was—deep-down fun. On the whole I guess I wish that someone like Cecil B. De Mille had taken it on—no "taste," plenty of action and operatic emotion. But it's not important, unless you're writing a social history of Hollywood. Or a commercial history. *Gone With the Wind* simply has nothing to do with that other, more important kind of history—the history of art.

fuselage. A deputation and a forty-piece band greeted both contingents as they arrived within a few minutes of each other at the airfield, which, like the rest of the city, had been festooned with flags and bunting. A motorcade took them to the Georgian Terrace Hotel, streets and rooftops lined with people and the band playing "Dixie" over and over again. ("They're playing the song from the picture!" Vivien exclaimed. Fortunately none of the local journalists overheard.) At the hotel, the mayor officially greeted the stars and presented them with Wedgwood coffee and tea sets. That night the charity ball took place on the Atlanta Bazaar set, transported from Hollywood, with the stars in costume, and the next day there was a luncheon with all the Southern governors, followed by a tea party at the Governor's Mansion, followed by a cocktail party for the press, followed by the four-hour premiere itself.

The acclaim was everything for which Selznick could have hoped. When the applause and weeping from deeply affected Southerners died down, general speechmaking and congratulations occurred at the microphone. For the first time, Margaret Mitchell expressed a public opinion. She had warned Selznick that she would say nothing until this moment, and then it would be the truth. As overwhelmed as everyone else, she praised the producer's courage and determination and thanked him "on behalf of me and my poor Scarlett. . . . It's not up to me to speak of the grand things these actors have done, for they've spoken so much more eloquently than I could ever do." The day had been too exhausting for further official celebrations. After a long night's sleep the visitors gathered next day for a last function, a luncheon given by the author at the Riding Club. Then everyone went home.

Local reviews and those in the Hollywood trade papers were equally gratifying. Declining to analyze the picture's greatness, the *Motion Picture Herald* concluded: "One does not ask what Rembrandt's paints were made of, or what quarry furnished Angelo his stone." Straight to the point as usual, *Variety* called it "a great picture . . . poised for grosses which may be second to none in the history of the business."

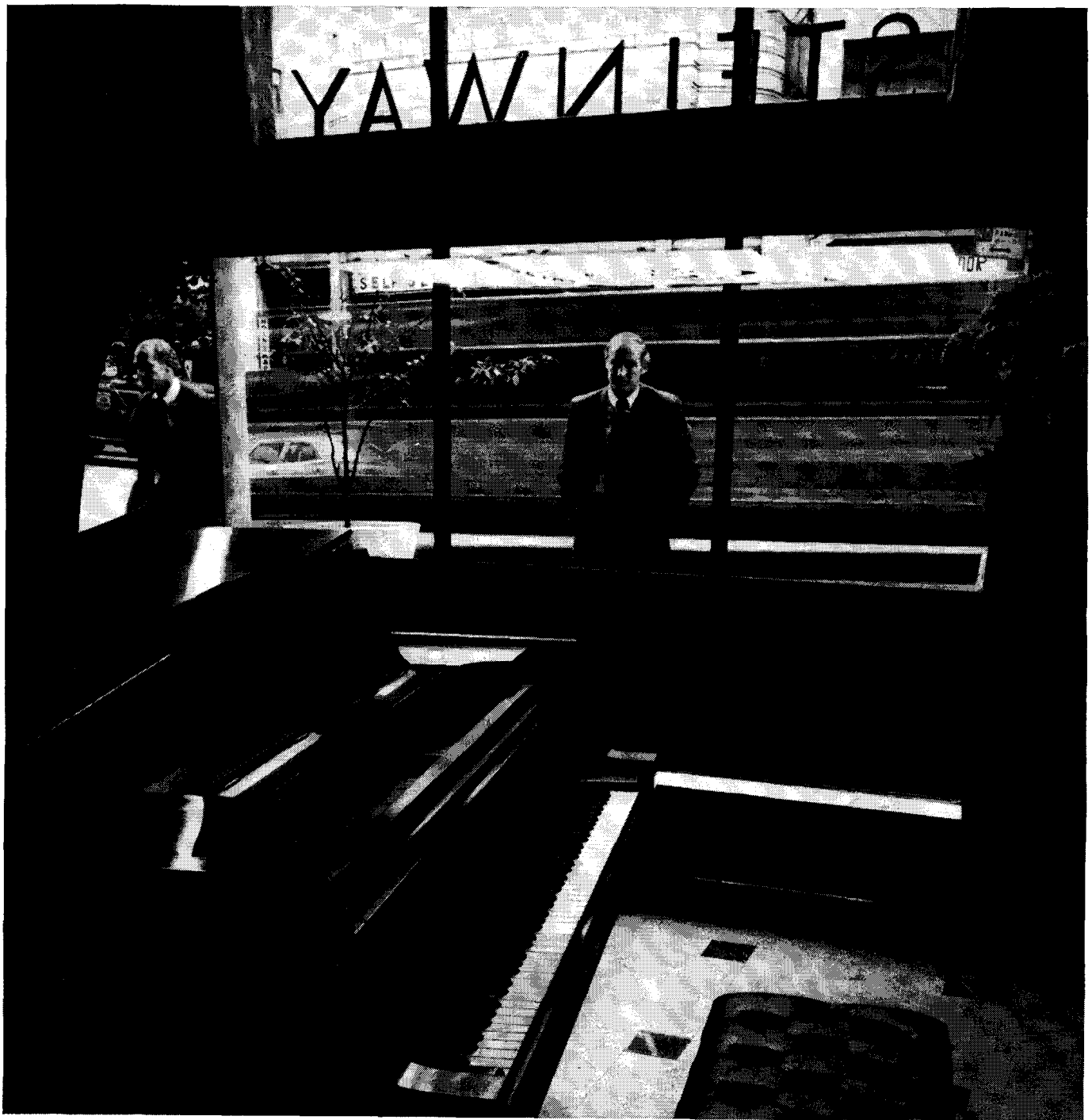
Poised it was. Gala New York and Los Angeles openings followed, the latter attended by several unsuccessful contenders for the role of Scarlett: Paulette Goddard, Norma Shearer, and Joan Crawford. The Los Angeles event was marred for Selznick by Gable's attitude toward him. The star had now openly taken Fleming's side, and decided to let it be known. Their encounter was "strained and peculiar." But the New York reviews might have been written by MGM's publicity department. Frank S. Nugent in the *Times*: "The greatest

motion mural we have seen and the most ambitious film-making venture in Hollywood's spectacular history." Archer Winsten in the *Post*: "Just as *Birth of a Nation* was a milestone of movie history, *Gone With the Wind* represents a supreme effort. . . ." At prices of 75 cents for matinees and \$1 for evenings, the picture began its extraordinary first run. By the end of it, in June, 1940, over 25 million people had paid admission.

Before this, at the Academy Award ceremonies on February 28, 1940, the industry had freighted Selznick with honors. *Gone With the Wind* won ten awards, more than any other picture before or since. Best picture; best actress, Vivien Leigh; best supporting actress, Hattie McDaniel (the first Oscar for a black performer, and the end of NAACP protests about the stereotyping of Negroes in the movie); best director, Victor Fleming, still angry and absent from the occasion; best screenplay, Sidney Howard; best photography, Ernest Haller and Ray Rennahan; a specially worded award to Cameron Menzies for his achievements in design and color; best art direction, Lyle Wheeler; best editing, Hal Kern and James Newcom; special effects, Jack Cosgrove; and the bonus of the Irving Thalberg Memorial Award "for the most consistent high level of production achievement by an individual producer" to Selznick himself. The neglect of Gable in favor of Robert Donat in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* acknowledged a big sentimental success; but Selznick, probably because of Gable's coolness toward him now, was not too heady with triumph to complain. He reproached Russell Birdwell, convinced that the publicity campaign was at fault. Later, and characteristically, he apologized.

Selznick had reached the climax of his career; it left him elated but uncertain. The screenwriter Frances Marion records in her autobiography, *Off With Their Heads!*, a chance meeting with him at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, soon after the awards. He was by himself, and said he'd like to buy her a drink and talk about his father. "There are times when I feel his hand on my shoulder. It wasn't there after we opened the picture in Atlanta, and I knew it was a success, but later, when I relaxed, confident of clear sailing ahead, that was when I felt him close. . . ." If he'd succeeded, it was because of Lewis J. Selznick. Then he recalled that his father had often said, "No man can rest on his laurels," and began talking of his hopes for *Rebecca*. His mood seemed to alternate between pride and a need for reassurance. "Once you're on top you're in the position of a circus performer walking the high wire with no net underneath to catch you if you fall. . . ."

Presumably because she thought it was what he wanted to hear, Miss Marion assured Selznick that he would never fall, not with his father's hand on his shoulder. □



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SOCIALISM IN CHINA

by Wassily Leontief

On the theory and
practice of promising no more
than you deliver.



It works. This is the conclusion that I brought home after observing the animated life on the crowded streets in five large Chinese cities, visiting communal farms, factories, and schools, and watching the endless panorama of the Chinese countryside glide by during long railroad trips through the eastern provinces. The 800,000,000 people—this total may be smaller, no one knows for sure—seem to be enjoying a decent, purposeful, and organized life, an equitable distribution of income and, for the time being at least, social harmony and peace.

The contrast with the sea of misery and utter destitution enveloping the small islands of conspicuous prosperity and opulence in the rest of the so-called underdeveloped world is so striking that it is almost unbelievable.

The train ride [I quote from my diary] from Hong Kong to Canton consists of two distinct parts: the first from Hong Kong to the border, the second from the border to Canton. The basic contours of the landscape are the same throughout the entire trip: hills, low in front, rising in the distance, freshwater creeks, canals, lakes, and ponds. On the low levels lush vegetation and intensive agricultural cultivation. The villages one passes on the first part of the trip are typical examples of the rural squalor one is accustomed to seeing in India and Puerto Rico or, closer to home, in poor backward areas of the old South. Creeks flowing by clusters of peasant dwellings are hardly more than open sewers, their shores strewn with debris and refuse of all kinds; yards behind the huts and even the streets in front are garbage dumps. On the other side of the border—as seen from my train window—ducks and geese swim in the ponds, and the shores and backyards are not disfigured by trash.

Later, on the longer train rides from Peking to Nanking, to Hangchow, and finally to Shanghai, over a thousand miles of rural countryside unraveled before our eyes: small towns, cities and villages, cornfields, rice paddies, irrigation canals, lakes and ponds. Everywhere people were actively at work, plowing, harvesting, weeding, threshing; little girls and boys watering buffalo, shepherding large flocks of geese and ducks or herds of pigs; fishermen casting their nets; gangs of workers laying railroad tracks; carts pulled by donkeys, buffalo, or men, transporting stone, brick, sorghum, sugarcane, and other agricultural products. Masons were laying walls, lining irrigation ditches, building arching bridges over the canals; women were washing laundry and attending to household chores in their backyards. There wasn't an idle person anywhere.

The prevailing agricultural technology is traditional, not to say medieval. Except for an occasional motor-driven water pump, most tasks are performed with the help of ingeniously contrived handmade wooden tools.

To be sure, when you visit an agricultural commune you'd think that trucks and tractors, harvesters, threshing machines, and chemical fertilizers were being introduced at a rapid pace, but there are obviously not enough of them to change the character of the landscape or to make decisive inroads on traditional, ancient techniques. While villages seen from the train have electric lights, the well-known industrial exposition in Canton contained displays of foot-pedal-powered movie projectors and operating-room equipment. In many rural regions electricity is probably an exception rather than the rule. However, statistical information that could confirm this and similar conjectures does not seem to be available, at least not to a foreign visitor.

The crowds in downtown streets of Peking, Shanghai, Nanking, and Canton corroborate the impression of the busy, purposeful existence that one sees in the country. Swarms of bicycles (instead of our swarms of cars), large and small stores, eating places and refreshment stands are all full of customers. A group of neatly dressed, giggling schoolgirls are engaged in the task—unusual for our schoolchildren—of constructing a low brick wall. Some mix mortar, some chip old bricks clean, and others lay them, handling the trowel with almost professional skill. Across the street a troop of children, plastic school bags slung over shoulders, move along holding hands and singing with some discord, but much enthusiasm, what obviously is a revolutionary song. On a playground at the corner teen-age boys play basketball.

The most conspicuous expression of the egalitarian spirit in the new China is the neat loose-fitting shirt and trousers—blue, white, or gray—worn by men and women, young and old, on city streets, in offices, factories, and in the fields. But what is truly startling is the total absence of hungry and sickly men, women, and children in rags—a sight so familiar to visitors in any underdeveloped area in Asia, Africa, or Latin America.

According to current unofficial estimates, the average per capita income in China is somewhere between \$150 and \$170 per year, which is less than in many other underdeveloped countries and less than one-twentieth the average per capita income (1971 estimate, \$3600) in the United States. But in China basic human needs absorb a fraction of the material costs needed to satisfy the demands of the high- and middle-income groups in our industrialized, prosperous society, and general living conditions for the average Chinese are decidedly better than those of disadvantaged Americans at the bottom rung of our economic ladder. The “average” figures in present-day China, however, are not abstractions; with little variation, they apply to nearly everybody.

In China, for example, bicycles play the same important, not to say indispensable, role that private cars play in the United States. Not only does the factory worker, schoolteacher, and many a farmer rely on his two-wheeler to get to and return from work; he also uses it for shopping trips and Sunday outings. The average monthly wage of a Chinese worker is 70 yuan (according to the official exchange rate, 1 yuan is worth 47 cents, in purchasing power somewhat more); the price of a new bicycle is about 140 yuan—that is, two months' wages. The average American worker earns about \$400 a month and a new car costs in the neighborhood of \$3000 or more, the equivalent of roughly seven months' American pay. Thus, normal needs for personal transportation cost even a two-bicycle family in China somewhat less, as a proportion of their yearly income, than a one-car family spends in the United States. The situation would, of course, be different if Mr. Wong owned a car and Mr. Wang, sensitive to his neighbor's material progress, began to take a dim view of his bicycle. The span between the lowest and the highest income in today's China is so narrow, however, that no significant difference between the life-styles of Mr. Wang and Mr. Wong arises.

In an agricultural commune, a textile mill, and a machine tool plant, in a department store or in a hospital, as well as in the universities I visited, the ratio of the highest earnings to the lowest seems to be typically three to one, or, when compared across the board, four to one. No one is rich or even very well-to-do and, what is most important, no one is seriously deprived or destitute. The three basic staples—rice and grain, cooking oil, and cotton cloth—are rationed. The food rations are ample (a pound or a pound and a half of rice or other grains per day per person); the cloth ratio is short: it is equivalent to two jackets, shirts, or blouses and two pairs of pants per year. However, rayon, wool, and other fabrics are not rationed, and judging by the well-stocked shelves in stores and by the neat appearance of people everywhere, are in ample supply. They are priced higher than cotton. Work clothing is supplied on the job.

A large district food store we visited in Peking has separate departments for dairy products, groceries, meat, fish poultry, fruit, and vegetables. Seventeen varieties of vegetables were arranged on the counter; three grades of chicken eggs, as well as duck and goose eggs. After selecting one of the live fowls displayed in cages, the customer takes it home ten minutes later plucked and dressed. There are no long queues and the sales personnel I observed seemed characteristically helpful.

Eighty percent of the Chinese population live and work on the land as members of gigantic agricultural communes. Numbering up to sixty thousand people, a commune is essentially a large administrative and managerial unit. Each settlement or village makes up

a productive brigade. The actual operating unit is a production team that usually consists of one hundred to two hundred workers.

Farming is supposed to be the main business of agricultural communes. The prosperous commune which I visited some sixty miles from Shanghai allocates only one-fifth of its labor force to industrial production, but this accounts for a full half of the commune's total revenue. A basket-weaving establishment, a fertilizer plant, a shop manufacturing a simple type of threshing machine, and even a plant engaged in producing metal pipe might by some stretch of the imagination be viewed as a natural extension of the commune's agricultural pursuits. But the factory turning out twenty thousand electric bulbs daily hardly could be justified on those grounds.

The commune is not an enterprise bent on maximizing the net revenue from the pursuit of one particular line of production. Rather, it is a social organization whose purpose is to secure the best possible living and working conditions for several thousand families in a particular location. Obviously, this purpose can be served better if diversified manufacturing employment is provided for members of what was a purely agricultural community.

Economic planners in Peking pursue systematic policies of decentralization. The long-distance transportation needs of that vast country have put severe strains on the well-run, but greatly overloaded, railroads; these are assisted to some extent by coastal and internal waterways. (The Great Canal connecting the southern provinces with Peking is being restored after many years of neglect.)

Although the Chinese automobile industry is still quite small, each province has already developed facilities for producing its own trucks. But wouldn't emphasis on self-sufficiency tend to perpetuate the disparity between the standard of living in regions enjoying particularly fertile land and favorable climate and those that have neither? The answer given me was that this strategy seems to be the most effective means of encouraging local effort and initiative.

While in the long run the progressive spread of industrial activities—concentrated in and around a few metropolitan centers—into the rural areas should reduce the disparity between material conditions of life in the cities and life in the country, other means are employed by the government to narrow this disparity more quickly.

First of all, the agricultural tax, that is, the obligatory delivery of farm products to the government, was frozen several years ago in actual quantities of produce to be delivered, so that with the steady increase in production, the tax, expressed in percentage terms, fell from 12 to only 6 percent of the total output of agricultural communes. At the same time, the prices paid by governmental pro-

curement agencies for farm products purchased by them were raised, while retail prices at which they are sold to consumers were kept constant. The difference between the two is covered by subsidies financed from general public revenues.

These revenues, incidentally, consist, in addition to the agricultural tax, of a turnover tax included in the price of all manufactured products and of profits from manufacturing and other productive enterprises owned by the government. The turnover tax is essentially a universal sales tax. Because of the much more equal distribution of income in China, it does not have the same regressive effects that the similar value-added tax being contemplated by the Nixon Administration would have in the United States. Moreover, luxuries are taxed higher than necessities; the sales levy on imported watches is as high as 400 percent.

The manpower policies of the government provide another effective means of counteracting undesirable tendencies toward inequalities which a single-minded emphasis on self-help might bring about. While in the United States the last vestige of obligatory public service will disappear with the replacement of the draft by voluntary military forces, in China military conscription provides a powerful device to make a very large number of young men and women serve not only the national defense but also many other kinds of public needs. For the 80 percent of the total population living in rural areas, the baggy green cotton army uniform and the cap with its small red star—worn without distinctions by all ranks—is no doubt the symbol of a most demanding kind of public service. From my hotel window early in the morning, I observed these green-clad figures performing—either individually or in small groups—daily calisthenic drills, then turning to entirely nonmilitary tasks such as cutting grass in the parks, turning it and drying it for hay. Through the windows of a train, I saw soldiers working on the tracks.

An equally and probably more significant method of bridging the gap between town and country is the organized flow of young people from cities to remote agricultural regions. After graduation from high school, the seventeen- and eighteen-year-old boys and girls do a two- or three-year stint in agricultural communes. For this experience they are prepared in advance by the great emphasis put on manual work in all school curricula. I've already spoken of high-school girls building a brick wall. One day (sometimes one and a half days) of the regular six-day school week is spent in shop or in other activities referred to as productive work. I saw these teen-age boys and girls shaping and welding bicycle wheel rims, stamping out and assembling parts for electric transformers. I also saw ten- and eleven-year-olds hammering away making wooden boxes on an assembly line. In public parks one often sees groups

of youngsters weeding lawns or planting flowers, their lunch boxes waiting on nearby benches. Students in universities and other institutions of higher education, while attending to their regular course work, are engaged at the same time in rather sophisticated productive tasks. On visits to Peking University, and to Fudan University in Shanghai, we saw the students constructing oscillographs, manufacturing miniaturized integrated circuits, industrial lasers, and other types of scientific instruments and specialized industrial equipment. All professional and managerial personnel in various institutions have to spend a part of every year in a factory or on a farm doing manual labor.

Mobility, or should one say adaptability, to spartan conditions of personal life is facilitated by ample provision of social services not available or available only to a limited extent even in such advanced countries as the United States. A working mother—in China all women seem to be working—leaves her child in a nursery school, kindergarten, or in the primary school attached to her place of work. In the textile plant we visited, in addition to the half-hour lunch break, mothers were permitted to run over to the nursery twice a day to see how things were going. In case of need, the children can be left in these institutions overnight or even for a week.

Both of my interpreters, a young woman and a young man studying in the Institute of Western Languages in Peking, were married. Their spouses worked, one as a technician in an airplane engine plant, the other as a teacher in a primary school. Both places of employment are situated on the outskirts of the town far from the university. During the week they lived in dormitories where they worked, and on weekends each couple was reunited in its own small apartment in town. A typical rent for working-family living quarters is 24 yuan (\$14) a year.

In China there is a universal six-day work week, with only five additional national holidays per year. Those whose next of kin live in another town or province are given a supplementary fourteen-day paid leave. Travel time is added to these fourteen days and the round-trip fare is paid by the organization to which one belongs.

Retirement age—the age at which one may but does not have to quit work—is fifty-five for women and sixty for men. These relatively low limits are, I suppose, attributable to the great physical exertion required by the generally traditional technology in China. Industrial workers are retired at 70 percent of their highest rate of pay. In the agricultural commune we visited, retired members have to be supported by their children. If they have no children, the responsibility reverts to the commune: these elderly people continue to live in their own

homes, but take their meals and spend much of their time on a rotating basis with neighbors. In a country where old age was always held in great esteem, such an arrangement would appear to be not only humane but practical as well. In addition to a secure old age, the commune solemnly guarantees each member's right to a decent, well-conducted funeral. While the traditional extended family is now a thing of the past, the smaller family is used as a basic building block of the social organization. On a visit to a hospital, for example, my attention was directed to a patient being cared for by his wife and his daughter.

"Eight hundred million people are more than enough for any country." This or other similar remarks usually introduce the description of comprehensive measures taken to keep down the population growth. The usual marriage age is 26-27 for women and 28-29 for men. Neither of the two couples I mentioned above had any children as yet. A great variety of birth-control methods is not only made available to all but is systematically promoted by personal counseling to small groups and to individuals. The charge for an abortion is one dollar. In the cities these measures are said to have brought the birthrate down. In a suburban agricultural commune the birthrate is estimated at 3 percent, the death rate at 1½ percent, which yields a growth rate of 1½ percent. In rural areas, however, the net growth rate is still quite high.

How about the overall performance of the economy? American visiting economists are told that they will have to wait for a "normalization of the relationship between our countries" before they can be given a reasonably full quantitative answer to this question. Judging by what was said in a day-long discussion with members of the Economic Institute of the Academy of Sciences in Peking and by what one saw and heard during the rest of the trip, the management of the economy as reconstituted after the Cultural Revolution is circumspect and careful rather than bold and experimental.

The typical order of priorities dominating the economic policies of most socialist and many non-socialist developing countries is reversed. In China agriculture comes first, light industry second, and heavy industry last. In other words, to maintain and to increase the level of consumption are considered to be more important than large investments in building up industry and productive facilities so as to secure higher standards of living for remote future generations. This does not mean, of course, that there is no growth; on the contrary, experts estimate the present growth rate of the Chinese economy to be not less than 6 and possibly as high as 7 percent a year.

Investment is financed not only by central gov-

ernment revenues, which consist of retained earnings of industrial enterprises and agricultural communes, but also through individual savings. Not only workers but also members of farm communes are said to be depositing as much as 10 percent of their income in savings accounts. In the latter case the income is derived not only from "work points" earned in communal labor but also from sales—to the government—of pigs and other animals and produce raised on tiny "private" family plots.

No public services, except schools, seem to be entirely free; however, the charges are moderate, to say the least: entrance to the Forbidden City in Peking, now operated as a gigantic museum and recreation ground, costs five cents, a visit to a doctor, ten cents. A day spent in a hospital costs fifty cents with an additional thirty-five cents for medical expenses. Even these charges are, however, paid by the factory, the commune, or whichever other organization one belongs to.

The methods of economic planning and many other formal aspects of economic administration seem to resemble very closely those in the Soviet Union. This is not surprising: during the early formative years of its existence, Russia was the principal, if not the only, mentor China had. The actual contents of these institutional forms differ, however, from what they are in Russia as much as the industrial exhibit now housed in the former palace of Soviet-Chinese Friendship in Shanghai differs from what was originally intended when that towering wedding cake of a building was gratefully received as a present from the Soviet Union.

While industrial equipment of quite modern types can be seen in these exhibition halls, the technology mostly used in industry and agriculture is anything but advanced. When asked what goods are to be offered for export in the envisaged expansion of trade with other countries, Chinese experts supplied a list headed by silk bristles, handicraft products, and some minerals.

Great emphasis seems to be laid on attainment of higher labor productivity through improved management supported by a gradual introduction of newer but well-tested technology, such as wider use of chemical fertilizers, motor-driven portable irrigation pumps and tractors in agriculture, and replacement of steam power by diesel locomotives on the railroads. The disastrous famines which regularly afflicted China in the past have not recurred in recent years. Improved methods of cultivation have certainly helped, but rational overall planning is probably even more important. "We count on two good crops, two bad ones, and one disastrous crop every five years; this is what we expect and what we have to be prepared for," we were told. In other words, agricultural planners maintain the food supply by the building up of sufficient buffer stocks. The ancient Chinese emperors used the same type of planning. However, they did so only

for the upper classes; now a steady supply of basic foodstuffs is guaranteed for everyone.

Of course, many countries, not only in the developed but also in the underdeveloped parts of the world, boast much higher average per capita national income and also higher overall rates of growth. But in nearly all of these countries such figures conceal a staggering disparity between the well-to-do and the very poor. If all countries were rated not according to the levels of their average per capita income, but rather according to the average per capita income received by the poorest 5 or 10 percent of their respective total populations, China's relative standing among countries rated on the basis of average per capita income would in many cases be reversed. Although no figures are available, China, now near the bottom on one scale, would rise quickly much closer to the top.

The unique accomplishment of socialist China is the establishment and, for the time being at least, effective maintenance of a social and economic order in which, in spite of a very low average per capita income, abject poverty has been virtually eliminated. Despite the modest material returns for their labor, all men and women capable of work appear to be fully and productively employed. Moreover, they seem to be performing the duties assigned to them with diligence and good cheer.

To explain why Chinese planners seem to be succeeding where others fail, it is important to understand the fundamental distinction between the motivation required for the efficient production of so-called "public," as contrasted to "private," goods. In the case of a private good, the connection between the effort exerted by an individual and the product of that effort is unambiguous because it is direct.

But if the gains that a member of our competitive society expects to derive from his own individual effort fail to materialize, in principle at least, he has only himself to blame. All he can do is find out what went wrong and try again. Even if he continues to fail, other members of the society can continue to enjoy the same private rewards for their own individual efforts as they did before.

Not so in the case of collective action. A persistent discrepancy between promise and actual performance can, and as a matter of fact should, be blamed in this case either on the incompetence of or misrepresentation on the part of the leadership and planners, or on antisocial behavior, that is, attempts to steal free rides by other members of the team; or more often on both. The natural response in either case will be an open or covert copping out, and consequently a progressive disintegration of the entire system. This is one of the reasons why collective enterprise so often limps or

even fails. The other reason seems to be that the organizers of collective action have a tendency to underestimate the total effort required to do the job and this raises unrealizable expectations and false hopes. In that case, even with the full cooperation of those called to take part in it, the collective action will founder. Needless to say, disappointment, mutual suspicion, and recrimination are bound to follow. The Chinese planners seem to be able to deliver what they promise.

There is, of course, an element of instability in this equilibrium. In spite of the fact that the reward expected from participation in the collective enterprise is forthcoming, a member of the team might nevertheless be tempted to get a free ride. Hence the steady stream of propaganda that tries to whip up enthusiasm for efforts on behalf of the common good. But much more important for the success of the Chinese system is the powerful reinforcing action of fulfilled promises themselves.

The economists in Peking are aware of the delicate nature of the balance. When asked why the prices of most consumer goods are kept absolutely constant—save for some seasonal fluctuation—year after year, they admitted that such rigidity deprives the price system of its ability to function as a shock absorber reducing the discrepancy between supply and demand, but they explained that consumers would be disoriented and disturbed by prices moving erratically up and down.

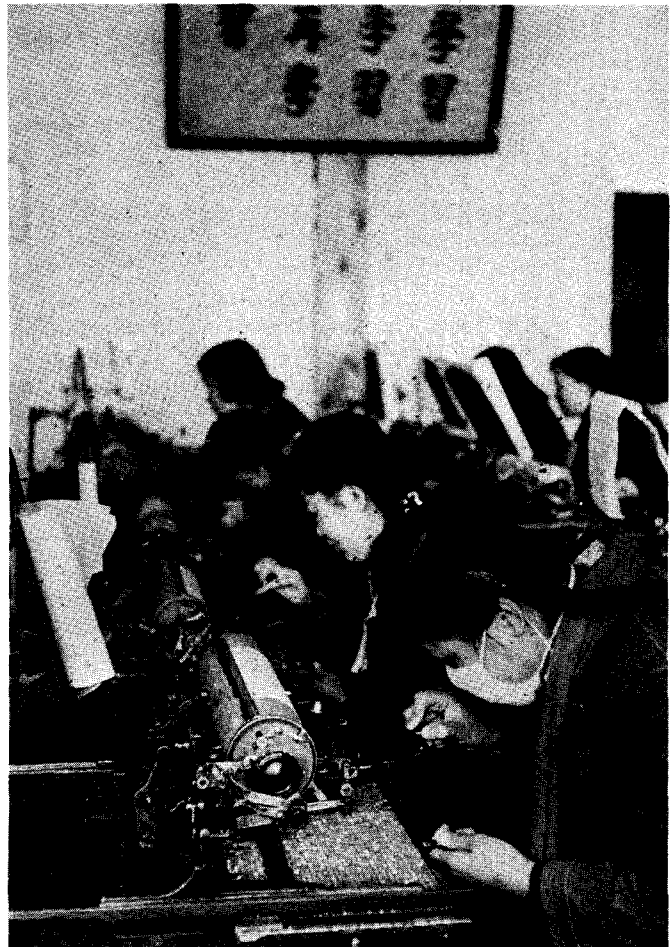
After the convulsions of the Cultural Revolution, economic planners proved themselves capable of satisfying the basic material needs of the entire population and they do not now promise more than that. Their expectations reasonably well fulfilled, the millions of workers seem to be exerting cooperative efforts, thus making possible realization of the plans and consequently of the promise. The steady flow of refugees over the Hongkong border testifies, on the other hand, to the fact that the rigors of communal discipline prove to be unbearable to many of the people.

How long can such an equilibrium be maintained? While anything but stagnant, the predominantly agricultural Chinese economy is still very simple, even primitive. As productive investment grows and technology advances and the population increase slows down, the economy will begin to serve more than just basic material needs. But it will also be more difficult to manage. Decentralization and self-reliance—as we are about to learn in the United States—are less effective as the system becomes more complex and the mutual interdependence among different industries and different regions grows. At the same time, even in an egalitarian society, the people, as their basic needs become better satisfied, will want to have more freedom of choice. This applies particularly to freedom in the realm of ideas.

In today's socialist China, freedom of the spoken

or written word and freedom of thought obviously do not exist. The leaders would most likely say that such freedom is a luxury that a system based on mutual cooperation in the pursuit of a single common purpose cannot afford. They would possibly add that the average man or woman confronted with a choice between the newly acquired sense of economic security and social equality on the one hand and intellectual freedom on the other would prefer the first. This most likely is correct.

But it does not settle the issue. In the long run freedom or, to put it more positively, an open conflict of ideas would prove to be an indispensable condition for human progress and social advance. Not unlike food, freedom is a source of direct personal satisfaction, but it is also an indispensable condition of health and normal growth. After a long period of malnutrition, the appetite may disappear. But as the experiences of the Soviet Union and other, older socialist countries seem to demonstrate, first a few and then many of the individual organs show signs of debility, and the system as a whole gradually begins to malfunction and to lose its capacity for healthy growth. Spasmodic adjustments—of which the Cultural Revolution is one example—may compensate for these deficiencies; on the other hand they may not. □



LUCY & MINNIE

A story by Shirley Faessler

Lucy is a very good-looking woman, a natural blond with teeth like little pearls and a beautiful figure size twelve. She can put on a thirteen ninety-five dress and on her it looks like a million dollars. She takes a beautiful tan and in the summer with her tan she wears a lot of white. White is white but on Lucy it looks like snow. She's not exactly a chicken, she's a good forty at least if not more, but you wouldn't give her more than twenty-five at the outside. She's a dress buyer for a cheaper-line department store with good pay and trips out of town. She lives in a four-room apartment which she keeps like a little doll's house, so clean you could eat off the floor. She also keeps an old mother at the Jewish home and that must cost her a good four hundred a month. The old lady is *oiverbootl*, she doesn't even know where she's at and Lucy could of put her in a Gentile nursing home for half of what the Jewish home charges, but her conscience wouldn't let her do it. Aside from the fortune it costs her to keep her mother there with all the extras, she's a good daughter to her in every other way too. Every Sunday come rain or shine she goes to visit the old lady, who talks foolish like a child, half the time calling her own daughter Ma.

Lucy's best friend, Minnie, is what you might call a grass widow. Her husband Archie walked out on her fifteen years ago and hasn't been heard from since. They say he stepped out one night, told her he was going to get some cigarettes, and never came back. Matilda—that's a woman they call Blabmouth behind her back—says it didn't happen that way at all. She says if it was cigarettes Archie was after he could of got them downstairs

at his mother-in-law's grocery store. Minnie's mother ran a grocery store. Minnie and Archie and their five-year-old boy Sonny lived over the store in three rooms; the old lady had her own place downstairs back of the store. Matilda says Minnie was playing cards the night it happened. That she got home around seven in the morning and her mother was just opening up the store. According to Matilda the mother said, "What did you need to come home so early? You're a free lady now, you haven't got no husband. Archie ran away." Then the old lady began to curse her, if you can believe that of a Jewish mother. And cursed herself too for raising such a daughter.

They say Minnie was pretty wild when she was young. Her father was very strict, he used to take the strap to her for coming home late, a girl of seventeen. When he died Minnie refused to sit *shivah* for him and that caused a scandal on the street. Matilda says that Sonny isn't Archie's kid. She says that Archie fell for Minnie and married her knowing she was two months pregnant. I never met the man, all I know about him is that he was some kind of *schlemiel* and had a job in a cleaning plant. You can't believe everything Matilda says; still and all I can't picture a Jewish father—*schlemiel* or otherwise—walking out on his own five-year-old kid, so there must be something in what Matilda says about Sonny not being Archie's kid.

Lucy and Minnie got to know each other from living on the same street, but just to say hello. Lucy's father was still alive and Lucy was still living at home. She used to step in the store to pick up a few odds and ends and that's how they got to know each other.

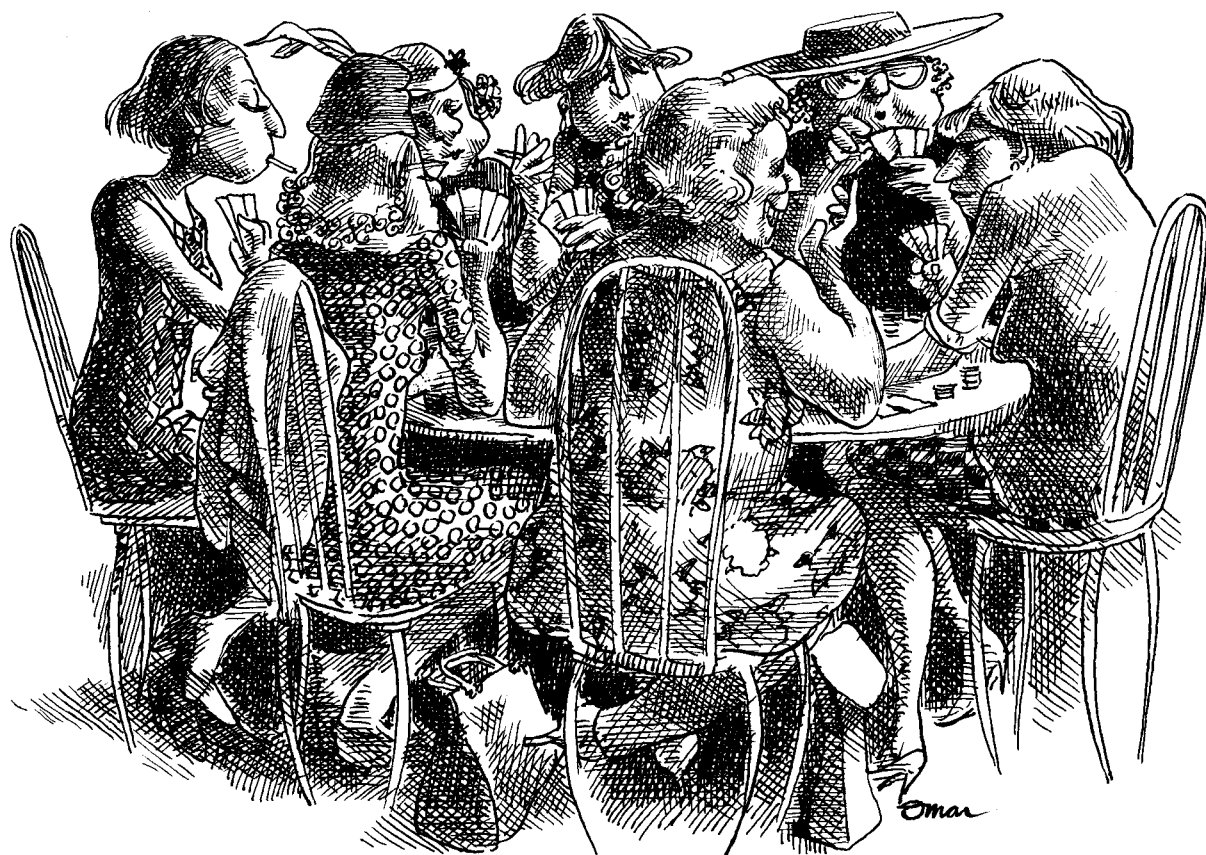
About a year after Minnie's husband skipped, Lucy's father died. Lucy already had her job as a dress buyer and had to go out of town a lot on buying trips so she couldn't look after her mother who was already getting to be a little soft in the head. That's when she began making preparations to get the old lady in the Jewish home. Which isn't so easy as it sounds. You have to pay through the nose for a start and they've got such a long waiting list that it's practically impossible to get an old parent in without knowing somebody on the Board. Being a buyer, Lucy got to know a lot of business people so she was able to swing it.

Minnie meantime was having her own problems. Her mother died a couple of months after Lucy's father, and she was stuck with the grocery store which she hated from having to slave in it as a kid. With her mother dead there was nobody to look after Sonny, so she had to quit the part-time job at Kresge's which she took after Archie left. The week Minnie sat *shivah*—for her mother she did sit—Lucy came around a couple of times to pay her respects. That's when they got to be real friends. Minnie was in a terrible state, she talked real wild. She told Lucy she'll burn down the store and collect the insurance. Lucy paid no attention, she figured Minnie was in a state of shock. She stepped in one night and nearly fell over when she saw Minnie in a huddle with a guy they call the Torch. He was a neighborhood boy, a parolee

fresh out of Kingston where he'd done a two-year bit for arson—a Jewish boy at that, if you can believe it. Lucy's a smart cookie, she took everything in her own hands. She told the Torch to beat it or she'll call the cops, then gave Minnie a strict lecture. Lucky for Minnie that she listened. With Lucy's help she put the building up for sale, sold the store lock stock and barrel, and realized a nice few thousand dollars.

It so happened there was an apartment for rent in the same building where Lucy was living, and she got Minnie to take it. That's when their real friendship began. Lucy worked, chipped in more than her share for the food, Minnie did the shopping and cooked the meals. They were like sisters, Lucy and Minnie, and Sonny was in seventh heaven. He loved Lucy, he called her Aunt Lucy. From being left alone with his grandmother, who was always busy in the store, he all of a sudden had a full-time mother and an auntie.

When Lucy had her holidays the three of them went to Miami Beach. They took Sonny everywhere; to the movies, to Chinatown, and even to the races when the spring and fall meet was on at the Woodbine. Three, four nights a week Minnie went to play poker, and Lucy stayed home with Sonny. Lucy herself liked a gamble, she played the races, the stock market, and one night when Minnie took her to a game, she got hooked to poker. After that they went together to play, and took



Sonny with them. He was a good kid, you could take him anywhere. The game-runner always made a place for Sonny at the table, between Minnie and Lucy. Every pot Lucy took she gave the kid a quarter. Ten o'clock, she made him go to bed; she was stricter with him than his own mother. There was always a bed in any game-runner's house for Sonny to sleep, and he always went to bed ten o'clock sharp with a nice few dollars in his little purse.

I got to meet them at Helen Lieberman's Friday night game, but that goes back a few years. Sonny's twenty-one now, and at that time he couldn't of been more than eight. That would make it thirteen years ago, my God how time flies!

Anyway, getting back to that night at Helen's thirteen years ago . . . I came early to Helen's and we sat around kibitzing, me and four other hands, waiting for Lucy and Minnie to show. I never met them till that night; all I knew about them is that they're both a pair of fast players, and very good friends. Half-past eight and we're still sitting, drinking coffee, waiting. The girls start getting impatient, and Helen was getting nervous. "Let's play," she says, "I'll take a hand myself till they come."

She'll take a hand, that's a very big deal. Helen's a fast player but not at her own game. All you'll get off her is the quarter edge; she'll fold every hand till she gets a pair on the wire to come in with. You won't get no gamble off a game-runner, that's for sure, and Helen's no exception. Who wants to play six hands with Helen playing on a sure thing and raking half a buck a pot, but nobody has the nerve to speak up. Except me. I have a reputation for speaking my mind. "Without me," I said; "half a buck rake from six hands is too rich for my blood." Helen looks hurt. "*Oy Gottinu*," she says, "since when do I take a half when we're playing short? I'll take a quarter till the game gets full."

That'll be the day. She'll take a quarter when you see her and a quarter when you don't. All of a sudden Mrs. Cramer jumps up from the table. She's a very high-strung nervous woman; they call her Crazy Cramer behind her back. "I have to phone Raymond," she says, and steps over to the phone which Helen keeps on a small table by the kitchen door.

Raymond is Mrs. Cramer's husband. He's an insurance salesman, a real cutie, a rounder. They say that aside from treating her like dirt he also keeps another woman. But we're not supposed to know that; Crazy Cramer pretends that everything between them is lovey-dovey. Anyway, she picks up the phone and dials her number. "Hello, dear," she says, "I'm at Helen's. What? Oh that's right, I did tell you where I was going, I forgot." The girls

wink behind her back. She's not talking to Raymond, she's talking to an empty phone. Matilda went upstairs once and listened in on the extension and all she heard was the phone ringing at the other end and Crazy Cramer talking on the downstairs phone as if she was connected.

Crazy Cramer is still on the phone. "Oh you're terrible, Raymond," she says, and starts giggling like sweet sixteen talking to a date. "I won't be late. Win, lose, or draw, I'll be home by two." She puckers up her mouth, gives a kiss to the mouth-piece, and comes back to the table blushing like a bride. How can a woman be so foolish? Who's she kidding? Herself, nobody else.

We met him once, this wonderful Raymond of hers, and this is how it happened. One night she tapped out at Helen's game and asked Helen for money. "Can you lend me some money?" she says, and Helen comes out with, "My mother claims she didn't raise no foolish children so the answer is no." Crazy Cramer had been playing hard luck for weeks and was already in to her for plenty; still and all, she had no call to talk to her like that. Mrs. Cramer is slow pay but she pays up every nickel, and Helen's been running a game long enough to know that some players you can talk to like that, and some you can't. Some players can take an insult, spit in their eye and they'll say it's raining; but not Mrs. Cramer, she insults very easy. She didn't say a word, just got white as a sheet and started to tremble. I felt very sorry for the woman. I was playing lucky, and I felt very tempted to take ten off the stack I had in front and loan it to her. But I didn't do it because it's hard luck to take money off the table when you're going good; you could start going bad yourself. In a game of poker you have to look out for number one.

Anyway, Helen starts to deal; everybody's quarter edge is in except Mrs. Cramer's. "In or out?" she says when she comes to her, thinking maybe she's still got a few hideaway bucks on her. Sometimes a loser will do that; they won't go in their poke to get case money, they'll pretend they're broke and get money off the house if they can. I've done it myself. Mrs. Cramer picks up her handbag off the floor. "In," she says, "put me in a quarter." Helen puts the ante in for her and deals around. Cramer's high on board with a king. "Bet a dollar," says Cramer, and puts her finger in for the bet. Helen lays down the deck. "No finger-bets here, Mrs. Cramer. Put your money in." Crazy Cramer opens up her purse, turns it upside down and empties everything out on the table; lipstick, compact, comb, Kleenex, Roloids, Tums, a gas bill, keys, car tickets, a checkbook, a ballpoint—everything except money. Then she shoves everything back in her purse. "See me through this hand," she says, getting very tense, "I'm not asking for blood, Helen." By this time she looks as if she could use a transfusion.

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Helen says, "Do me a favor please and fold your hand." Cramer says, "No. Put my bet in." Helen pays no attention; she calls for me to bet out, I'm sitting next to Cramer with a jack on board. I put a buck in for the bet, Crazy Cramer grabs it off the table and tears it up in little pieces like confetti. You see a lot of funny things at the games, but this is something I never saw before. I took my stack off the table, who knows what she'll do next. Mrs. Cramer turns over her hole card, a king. She had a pair of kings to come in with and not a dime to bet out on them. She gets up from the table trembling like a leaf, but very calm. "How many years have I been playing here?" she says to Helen.

"Who knows?" says Helen. "Do I keep an attendance record?"

"I'm playing here seven years," says Cramer.

"So what do you want?" says Helen. "A medal?"

"I lose hundreds here, I ask for a few measly dollars and I'm insulted," says Cramer, beginning to cry.

"What is she crying?" says a player they call Auntie Dora. Nobody bothers to answer. Auntie Dora is an old hand around seventy-five and deaf as a post.

"Mrs. Cramer," says Helen, "I never said no to you before, but enough is enough. I'm running a game. Say yourself, can I stake every loser that sits at my table?"

"I'm due for a break," says Cramer. "I want to have the game at my house next Friday."

Sometimes a game-runner will do that, give her night over to a loser. The rake is good for about twenty bucks an hour; the game usually goes from eight till around five, six in the morning, and it gives the loser a chance to get herself straightened away.

"With pleasure," says Helen. "Get a few hands together and I'll come to you myself."

To get rid of her we all gave our word we'll come to her game next Friday.

"Call me a cab," she says, like royalty. Helen calls a cab and gives her two bucks for the fare.

We came to her game next Friday like we promised; I was very surprised to see what a nice house she lives in. We started to play around half-past eight, Mrs. Cramer dealing and raking half a buck a pot. Half-past twelve she puts a clean cloth on the table, gives everybody a linen serviette if you please, and brings out the supper, a regular banquet. Her own baked lima beans, her own corned beef, chicken livers with lung, a rice casserole with barley and mushrooms, Cokes, coffee, a banana cake, and chocolate chip cookies that she made herself. She waited on everybody else but didn't eat a bite herself. She's sitting on pins and needles waiting for us to finish. She had a nice few bucks on her from the rake and wanted to get the game going again. I was a nice winner so I took my

time; a loser always eats fast, a winner takes her time. I'm still eating and she takes my plate off the table. "Take it easy," I told her, "you'll live longer and wind up stronger."

Quarter-past one we're finished and the game starts up again. Crazy Cramer deals around, and deals herself in too. We're sitting seven hands, she didn't need to play, but she couldn't keep away. She was a loser right off the bat. For a player like Cramer there's no bad cards in the deck. Half-past two, rake and all, she starts going broke at her own game. She's a very unstable woman, how can you feel sorry for a person like that?

All of a sudden her wonderful Raymond comes in, dressed like a prince. Crazy Cramer jumps up like somebody goosed her. "Oh, Raymond," she says, "I'd like you to meet the girls." He takes a fast look-see and without waiting for any introductions goes upstairs. Crazy Cramer picks up the deck; she starts excusing him, her face is on fire. A few minutes later and he's back, dressed in red-and-black-striped pajamas. "I'll give you five minutes to throw these bums out," he says to his wife, "or I'll come down and personally throw them out myself."

He goes upstairs and we start packing in. Auntie Dora doesn't know what's going on, she's still holding her hand. "What's the matter?" she says, and Matilda shouts in her ear, "He called us bums."

"That's all?" she says.

I gave her to understand that we're being kicked out. For myself it couldn't matter less, I was a nice winner. But she was a loser over eighty bucks, and got very worked up. She's been playing forty years, she says, and something like this she never saw in her whole life. "Very nice," she says to Crazy Cramer, who's crying by now. "Very nice, Mrs. Cramer."

And that's how we met this wonderful Raymond of hers.

Anyway, getting back to that night at Helen's, the night I met Minnie and Lucy for the first time . . . Mrs. Cramer sits down after that fake call to Raymond, and Matilda—who can be real bitchy in a kind of sly way—starts singing "Love Your Magic Spell Is Everywhere." Mrs. Cramer is a very restless woman who never sits still for a minute. Win or lose, she's always twisting and turning in her chair as if she's sitting on pins and needles. She weighs altogether a hundred and two pounds and has big eyes, a pointed nose, and hardly any chin. Sitting still for a change and looking daggers at Matilda who's a big woman, she looks like a starved little bird sizing up a big fat worm.

Then a very unexpected thing happened. Mrs. Cramer picks up her cup of coffee which is cold by

now, leans across the table and gives it to Matilda, a face full of coffee! Well, you can imagine the hey rube that followed. Matilda with her face wet and coffee dripping off her chin on that sweater she wears all the time stretches halfway across the table, grabs Mrs. Cramer by the hair, and starts banging her head on the table. "You're crazy," she says, "no wonder they call you Crazy Cramer." Mrs. Cramer doesn't make a move. Matilda's banging her head in and she's saying, "Excuse me I didn't mean to do it." Helen meanwhile is hollering, "Matilda, behave yourself!" and Auntie Dora keeps asking, "What are they fighting?" Helen's husband Harry comes to the door and stands there yawning and scratching himself, he's always half asleep. He doesn't know if he should interfere, he takes his orders from Helen. "What are you standing!" she hollers, so he goes behind Matilda, grabs her around the middle and lifts her off her feet. Matilda takes her handbag off the floor and goes to the bathroom to clean herself up. Mrs. Cramer who's white as a ghost by now goes over to the sink, takes a drink of water, then looks at herself in the mirror. "Look what she did to my hair," she says, half crying. She puts a comb through her hair, which she wears in a kind of pompadour style, comes back to the table, and lights a cigarette; her hand is trembling. "She's jealous," she says, "that's why she keeps needling me. She can't get a man of her own so she goes after someone else's husband." She takes a deep drag on her cigarette and says, "A home wrecker is the lowest kind of human being."

Matilda is supposed to be having an affair with Milky. He's the cabbie who drives the poker loads, a married man with five kids, a baldy little runt with a hoarse voice and a milky-white complexion. When Milky goes for a poker load, Matilda's already in the car riding up front. He calls her his sweetheart and it could be that they've got something going between them. Personally, I find that very hard to picture.

Matilda finally comes out of the bathroom with her sweater sponged off. It's a good thing it had coffee spilled on it, otherwise it would never get washed. Same minute the doorbell rings. Harry goes to the door and lets in Lucy and Minnie and Sonny. I took to Lucy right away, she was very friendly and really something gorgeous to look at. I'm not the kind of woman to be jealous of another woman's looks. My husband thinks that I'm the cat's meow and if a woman is appreciated by her husband she can hold her own anywhere. He's an older man I'll admit, and I can just imagine what they say behind my back. They probably say that I'm married to an old *schmendrick* and that he gives me money to play because he can't give me anything else. To your face butter wouldn't melt in their mouth, but you'd be surprised how two-faced they can be behind your back.

Minnie was something different from Lucy, very reserved and not very friendly. She was dressed in a slack suit, too mannish for my taste but on her it looked good, she has that kind of figure, flat-chested. Her hair she wore in a kind of boyish style, too young a haircut for a woman of her age. It would suit a teen-ager and Minnie at that time must of been a good thirty. Sonny eight years old was a living doll with a peaches-and-cream complexion and blond hair. Doesn't begin to resemble Minnie, who looks like a gypsy with her dark skin and black hair. Not that it's any of my business, but I remember hearing that Archie was dark-complexioned too.

The game started off real fast. Right off the hop Lucy raised up a nice pot, took the hand, put a dollar in the kitty—she and Minnie were kitting—and gave a quarter to Sonny. Minnie I noticed didn't give the kid a quarter from any of her pots. Ten o'clock, Lucy says to him, "Sonny, it's time." He took his little red purse off the table, said good-night like a little gentleman, and went to sleep in the front room on Helen's chesterfield.

That was thirteen years ago, and over the years I got to know them pretty well. Well, I shouldn't say I got to know them *pretty* well, because aside from the games they kept to themselves. They didn't socialize around with the players. Once in a blue moon on an off night when there was no game going anywhere you'd get an invite to Lucy's or Minnie's place for a game of gin rummy. At their own place they were wonderful hostesses; at the poker games Minnie was very bossy with Lucy. But they never had a quarrel; they were a pair of fast players and win or lose they never caused no disturbance; it was a pleasure to sit at the same table with them. They were an asset to the games. All a game-runner had to say was, "Lucy and Minnie are coming," and the players came running.

Sonny's twenty-one now. It's hard to believe, but that kid actually grew up under my eyes. When he was thirteen, fourteen he stopped coming to the games with Lucy and his mother; by that time he was old enough to stay home by himself. He had three years in high school, and when he was eighteen he quit school and got himself a shipper's job in a dress factory. He bought a car and used to drive Lucy and his mother to the games. Sometimes he even looked in around three, four in the morning to see if they're ready to come home.

Two weeks ago on a Monday we were playing at Ada Mooney's. Around three in the morning the doorbell rings, and it's Sonny. Minnie was losing, she wanted to play a while. "Go home, Sonny," she told him, "we'll play awhile."

"Not me," says Lucy, "I have to go out of town tomorrow." She breaks out the kitty, gives Minnie

her share, takes the other half for herself, and goes out with Sonny.

Friday, Milky comes to take me to Helen's and Matilda's riding up front, very excited. "Did you hear the news!" she says. "Lucy eloped with Sonny."

Naturally, I couldn't believe my ears. "Where'd you hear that?" I asked her. "Who told you?"

"Me," says Milky. "I just rode Minnie over to Helen's. I could see she was steamed up over something so I asked her what's the matter and she opened up to me. Don't say I told you," he says, and lets us off at Helen's without even coming in for the fare, he was so nervous.

We step in to Helen's, and sitting around the table is Helen, Minnie, Auntie Dora, Crazy Cramer, rich Mrs. Mintz, Rose Naftuly—that's a player they call Murder Incorporated behind her back—and Millie, who's a young player new to the games. We sit down and nobody even bothers to give us a hello, they're so busy talking.

Minnie finally looks at me and says, "What do you think of it?"

"Think of what?" I answered, pretending I don't know anything.

"Don't tell me Blabmouth here didn't tell you," she says pointing with her thumb at Matilda who's already sitting next to her. "Have a look at this," she says and hands me a telegram. "Read it. Read it out loud," she says, "don't keep Matilda in suspense."

DEAR MA, I read out loud, LUCY AND I ARE ON OUR HONEYMOON. WE GOT MARRIED TODAY AND ARE VERY HAPPY. SONNY. I noticed that the telegram came Tuesday, from Miami Beach.

"So what's your problem?" I said. "He's happy."

"It's easy for you to talk," she says, "you're not a mother."

Crazy Cramer puts in her two cents' worth. "It might work out better than you think. Look at Dolly and Sambo. She's a good twenty years older and they're happy."

"Don't even mention that low-life Sambo in the same breath with Sonny," says Minnie, doing a slow burn. She lights a cigarette and says, "Ever since Arch passed away that kid's been my whole life. Anything he ever wanted off me he got and this is how he repays me."

"I didn't know Archie passed away," I said.

She gives me a very cold look. "So far as I'm concerned he's as good as dead."

"Do you want my advice, Minnie?" says Helen. "It's not worth getting worked up over. Your health's more important. You've got your own life to lead and life's too short."

"What did she say?" says Auntie Dora, and Millie the new player leans over and tells her in her ear, "She said life's too short."

Matilda speaks up. "It's funny when you come to think of it, the way she used to give Sonny a quarter from her pots for bringing her luck. She always said Sonny was her lucky piece," says Matilda, who's practically in Minnie's lap by now.

"Get off my lap please," says Minnie. "I know this is a great picnic for you."

Millie the new player isn't interested in the gossip, she wants the game to get going. "Let's play," she says to Helen, then says to Minnie, "I only met Lucy the once and from what I saw of her I think she's a very nice girl."

"Girl!" says Minnie. "She's my age."

"You'd never know it," I said, "she keeps herself very youthful." Actually she does look older than Lucy, but it's a remark I shouldn't of made. I happened to say it without thinking.

She turned on me like a snake. "Shake hands with Blabmouth," she says, "you're a good friend too."

"We were like sisters," she says to Helen. "We were closer than sisters. Now it's good-bye Minnie, hello mother-in-law. We're kitty partners over fourteen years. Did you ever see me kitty with anyone except that whore?"

"Behave yourself, Minnie," says Helen, "that's no way to talk."

"That's what you know about it," says Minnie. "She's a two-timing bitch *and* a whore."

All of a sudden she starts to cry, which is very unusual for Minnie, she's a very controlled woman. "She's got Sonny now, what does she need me," she says, and her eyes are running with tears.

From what I understand she didn't feel this bad when Archie lit out. Minnie never cracks, to get a word out of her is like pulling teeth, so naturally that last remark of hers made me think.

Next few days I thought about it and thought about it. I wished I had someone to talk to, but they'd never convince me that a situation like that is possible between two *Jewish* women. I tried to discuss it with my husband, but he's developed an ulcer recently and couldn't care less.

Anyway, next thing you know the couple are back from their honeymoon and Minnie's at the airport to meet them. Sonny took his clothes out of his mother's apartment and moved in to Lucy's. They still eat together and Sundays the three of them go to the Jewish home to visit Lucy's mother. Minnie calls the old lady *machetayneste*—her son after all is married to her daughter. The old lady still calls her own daughter Ma, and sometimes she thinks that Minnie is her Ma.

Lucy and Minnie are back at the games, kitting, good friends, and everything from the outside is the same as it was before. What I mean is, it is and it isn't. Things are the same and they're not the same. I still wish I had an intelligent person to discuss it with. □

IF IT IS NOT TRUE, IT IS WELL IMAGINED

by Richard W. Murphy

When in Ravello . . .

The other day I came across a small, frayed, khaki-covered book wedged in the back of a desk drawer. I opened it and read this sentence: "That sick man would get well if he perspired freely and opened up his bowels." (*Quell' infermo guarirebbe se sudasse bene e evacuasse abbondantemente.*) It took me back to Ravello.

For some people Italy is the Piazza San Marco at twilight, with the lamps lit and the orchestras playing; or the lake of Como with the gardens hanging over the water; or the massive brown palazzi of Florence or the faded pink palazzi of Rome. For me it is not any of these, nor is it the voice of poets. When I think of Italy I am thinking of Ravello in the long chill of winter and the handy tourists' phrases of A. L. Frothingham, sometime of Princeton University, preserved in his little brown book.

We had gone to Ravello one January because we had heard that it was warm. That is incorrect. It is high—1200 feet above the Gulf of Salerno, on a steep limestone ridge that is part of the watershed of the Sorrentine peninsula. In the valleys on either side of it and in the town itself Roman remains have been found, and also remains left by the Saracens, who invaded periodically until they were defeated by a fleet from Amalfi in 1113. In ancient documents the town is called Rebellum and the inhabitants Rebelli—presumably because they rebelled so insistently against the sovereign authority of Amalfi and squabbled so insistently among themselves and with their neighbors in

Scala across the valley, a habit they still have. After it became independent in the thirteenth century, the town traded much with Sicily, Egypt, and the Orient, built a great reputation for the dyeing of stuffs, was raided occasionally by the Barbary pirates, and finally lost a large part of its population and most of its trade to the plague of 1656.

Boccaccio mentions Ravello in the *Decameron* (Second Day, Fourth Tale) and is said to have visited the town in the company of King Robert the Wise. Many other people have been there. Several popes of the Middle Ages stayed for a time at the Villa Rufolo, as did Charles of Anjou, King of Na-

*Quell'
infermo
guarirebbe
se sudasse
bene e
evacuasse
abbondantemente*



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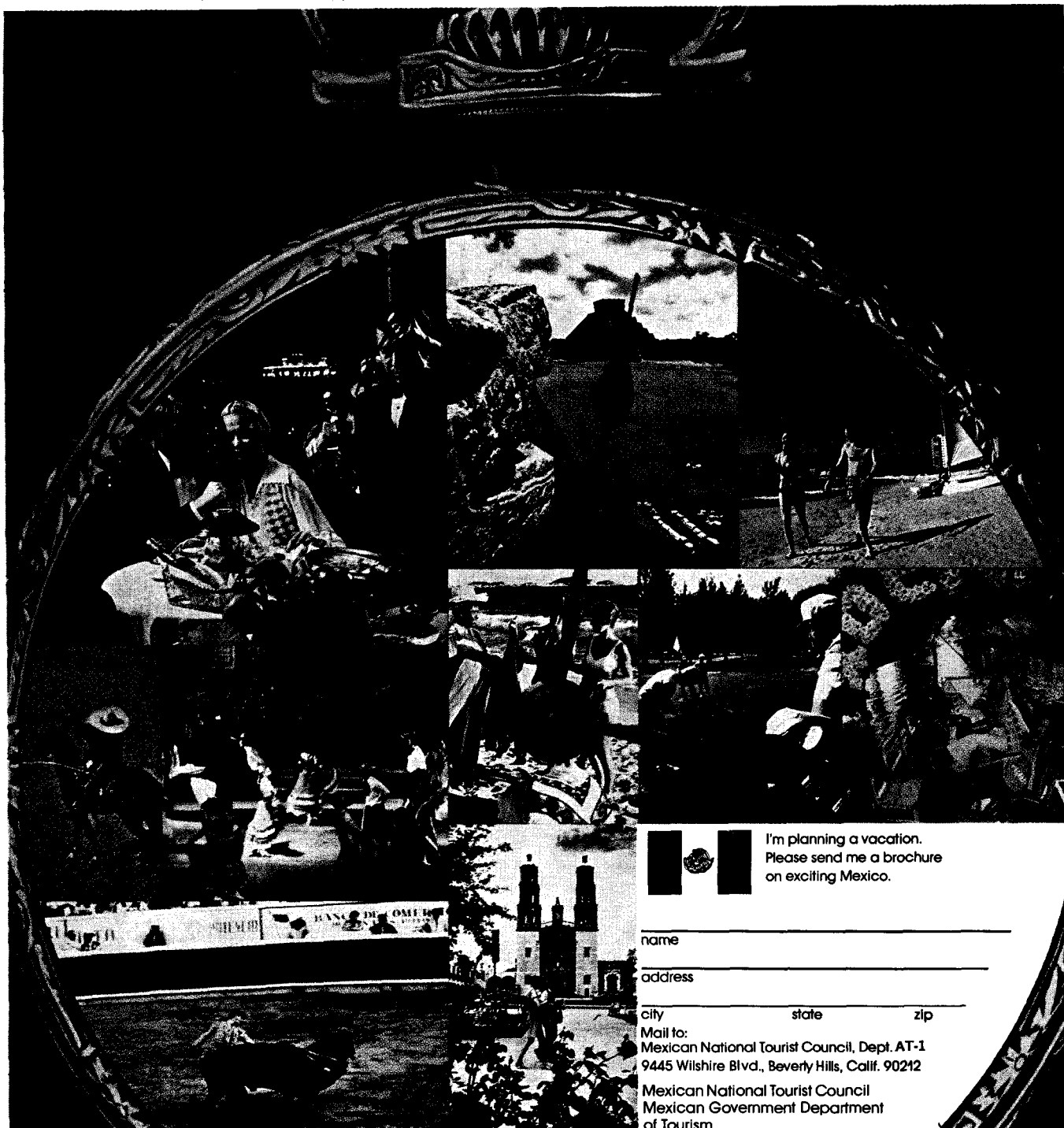
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ples. Richard Wagner arrived in 1878 and wrote the second act of *Parsifal* while contemplating the Rufolo's garden. Leopold Stokowski and Greta Garbo arrived in 1936 to spend a few idyllic weeks in the Villa Cimbrone, which is perched on a spur of limestone high over the lemon groves and sea. John Huston, Truman Capote, Humphrey Bogart, and Peter Lorre turned up in 1953 for the filming of *Beat the Devil*; Jacqueline Kennedy vacationed there in 1962; my wife and I arrived in 1966 in a high wind and cold rain.

I was introduced to A. L. Frothingham by a traveling dentist named Mancini. Ravello, like the other towns of the peninsula, did not have a resident dentist, and Dr. Mancini used to drive from Naples twice a week and receive patients from the area in an office he kept in Amalfi. On his office wall he had, in addition to his dental school di-

weeks after we settled in Ravello. It turned out that he was fluent and illiterate in both English and French. He saw at once that I spoke no Italian, and as I was leaving he gave me first his card ("*Specialisti Malattie Bocca e Denti*") and then a book that he said would be "of a grand necessity" to me if I wanted to master Italian. It was A. L. Frothingham's *Simplified Italian Manual*, a grammar and phrase book full of "sentences that are especially likely to be of practical use" in "a typical selection of fields and topics."

When I got home I opened Frothingham and read the sentence (*Quell' infermo guarirebbe se sudasse bene e evacuasse abbondantemente*) with which this piece began. Then I read this: "Why do you always stand up?" "Because my wounds prevent me from sitting or lying down." (*Perchè state sempre in piedi? Perchè le mie ferite m'impediscono di sedere o giacere.*) I turned to the front of the book.

Frothingham, I read, was "formerly of Princeton University" and had passed twenty years in Italy among "all kinds and conditions" of Italians. His book was published in 1918 by the Princeton University Press, and the author apparently enjoyed the "generous assistance" of one "Prof. Gauss," presumably the same Dean Christian Gauss of Princeton who served as the intellectual conscience of so many young writers—including Edmund Wilson and Scott Fitzgerald—before, during, and after World War I. The manual was originally designed for "the intensive preparation . . . of a group of men going to the Italian front for Y.M.C.A. work" and had been "thoroughly revised" for the general traveler.

Frothingham apparently had difficulty adjusting to the armistice of November, 1918. I don't know whether the general travelers of the 1920s for whom he wrote bothered to memorize sentences like "On the crest of that mountain there is some heavy artillery" (*In cima a quella montagna c'è dell' artiglieria pesante*) or "There were brought today to the warehouse two thousand guns, six hundred cartridge boxes, eight hundred knapsacks and two hundred swords" (*Oggi hanno portato in magazzino duemila fucili, seicento giberne, ottocento zaini e duecento spade*). My wife and I tended to ignore them. Nevertheless, by an odd trick of the memory, I still have in my head "We need at once fifty-six bandages in the fourth house on the right" (*Ci abbisognano subito cinquantasei fascie nella quarta casa a destra*). My wife can still say, if pressed, "This house is paradise, after the din in the trenches" (*Questa casa è un paradiso, dopo lo strépito nelle trincee*).

With or without military references, I found Frothingham's an odd phrase book. Its mood varied from the starkly practical ("It has been neces-



*Perchè
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*Perchè
le mie ferite
m'impediscono
di sedere
o giacere.*

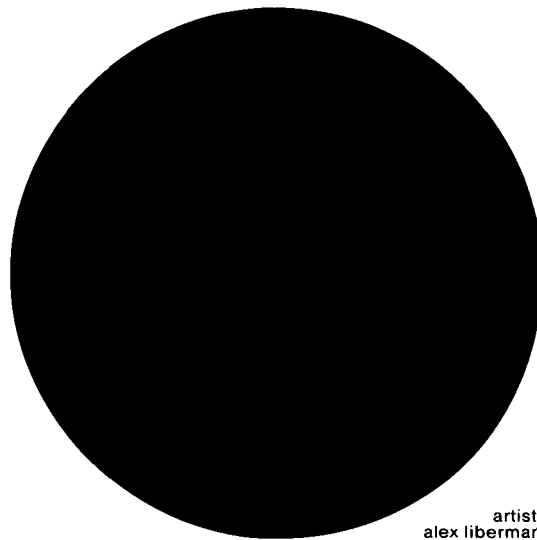
ploma, a picture of Jacqueline Kennedy beside pictures of the Virgin and of St. Bonaventura di Potenza. His nurse, a teen-age local girl, referred to her as "Madonna Jacqueline."

I remember Dr. Mancini as the only dentist who has ever treated my teeth with courtesy and consideration. He understood instinctively, I think, what any inhabitant of that coast must know—namely, that the appearance is the reality—and he was therefore able to go about his business in a perfectly painless way. When you went for a cleaning, he did not bother with picks and brushes and such impedimenta, but instead dabbed the teeth lightly with cotton soaked in a mild ammonia solution, producing in the mouths of his patients smiles of extraordinary brilliance and intensity but comparatively short duration.

I went to him with an ailing tooth a couple of

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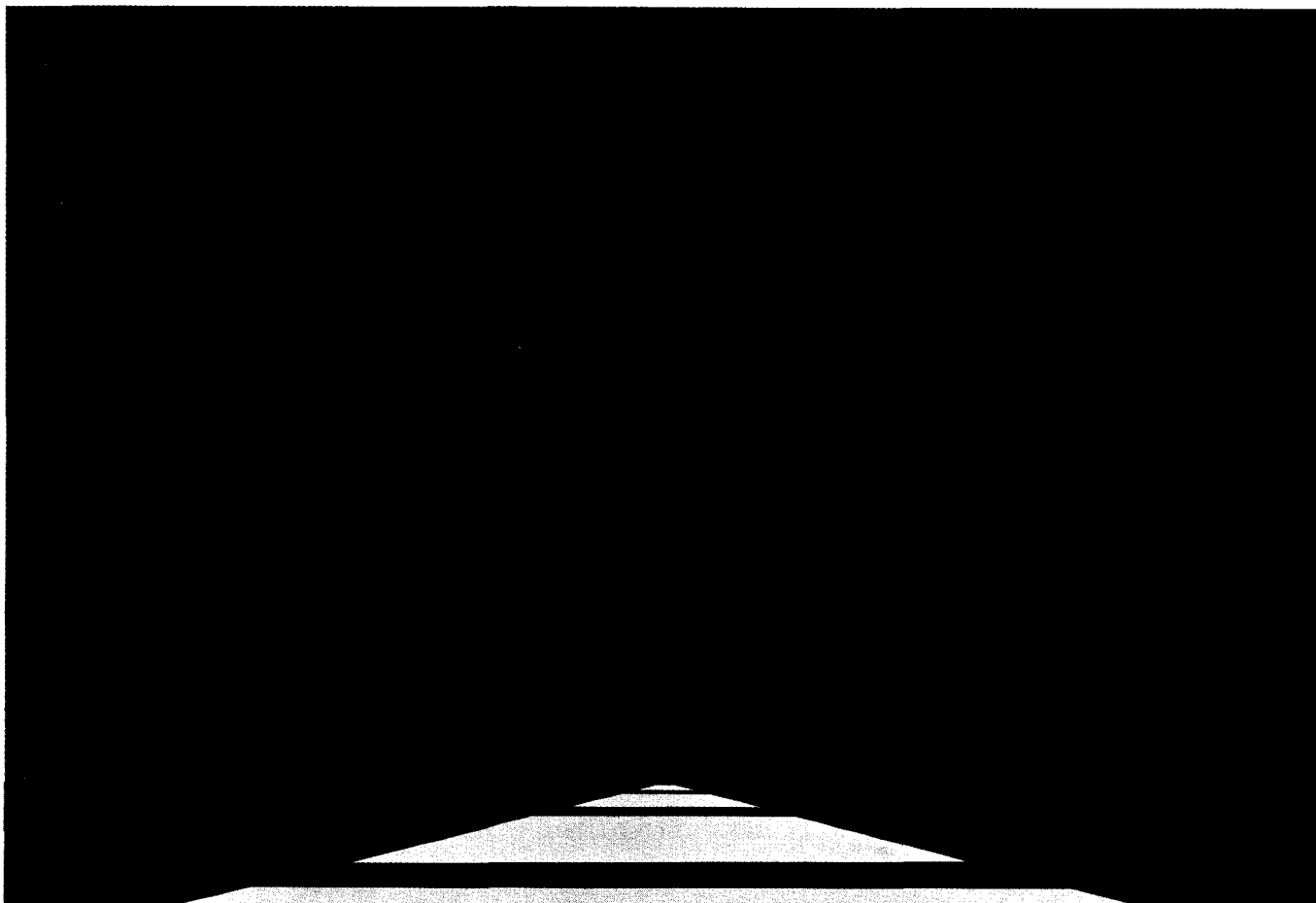
The real

In some countries a man can walk all day without seeing another man. In other countries people live crowded into barrios, into shacks, even into empty sewer pipes, one stacked upon another.

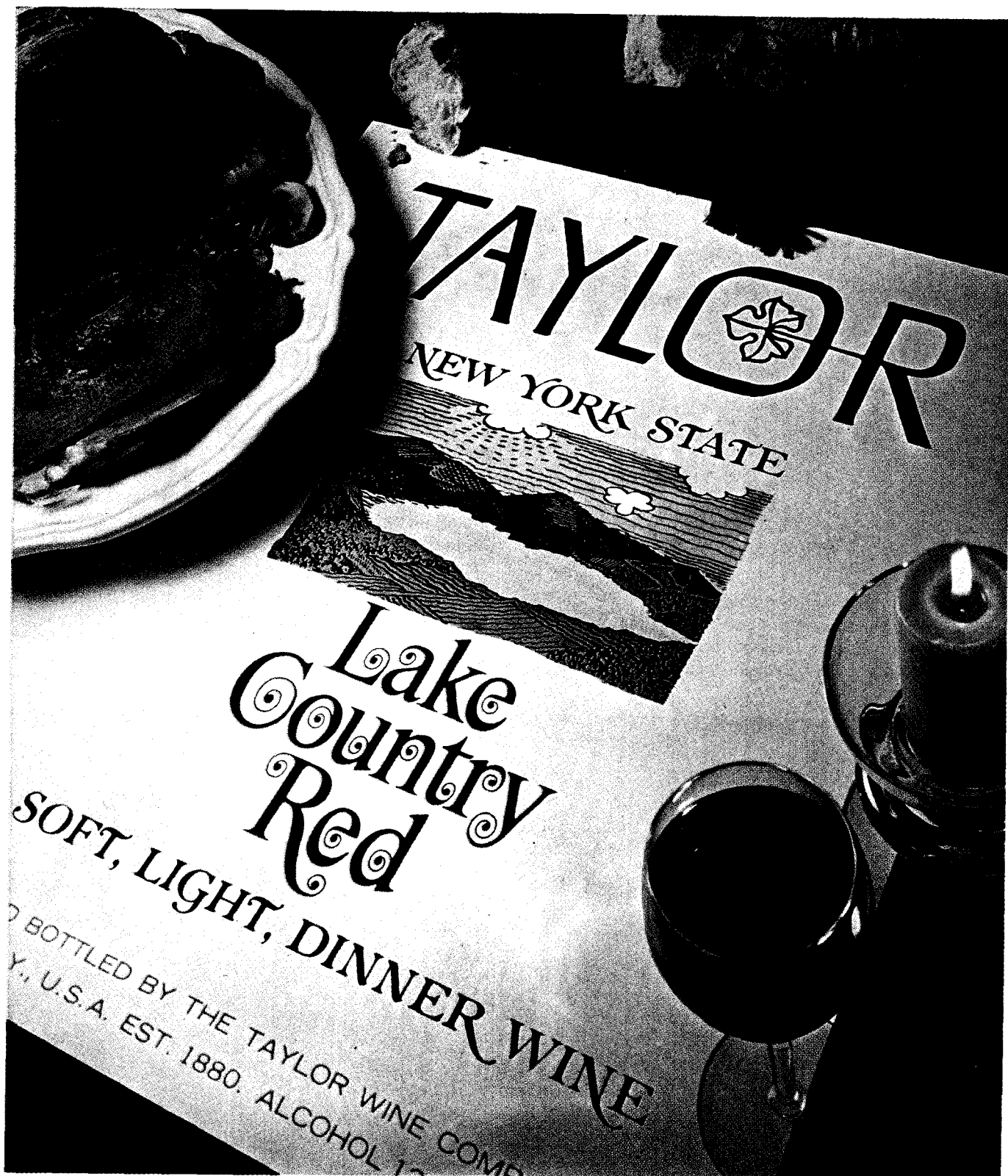
Over-population and population imbalance are critical problems: too many people in a small area creates pollution; too many people on too little land to support them creates poverty, illness and hunger; too many people crowded into too little space creates frustration and anger.

Even though each country or culture feels it has its own best answer, population is a worldwide issue. Nations must work together while there is still time. Questions must be asked; solutions must be found.

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sary to make a new cemetery”—*Si è dovuto fare un nuovo cimitero*) to the hygienic (“The best thing for fleas is Persian Powder”—*Contro le pulci bisogna la polvere insetticida*) to the philosophical (“We must play and laugh to forget our troubles”—*Bisogna giuocare e ridere per dimenticare le nostre pene*) to the wryly ironic (“The helmet has come back into fashion”—*L’elmo è tornato ad essere alla moda*). Often, reading those simple sentences, I had the feeling that Frothingham, somewhat like Kafka, was telling me more than he was saying, although I was never sure what. I was particularly haunted, I remember, by two sentences from Exercise 16: “To give a little gaiety to the soldiers we are going to have some music. There will be a pianist, a violinist and two poets” (*Per dare un po’ d’allegria ai soldati avremo della musica. Ci sarà un pianista, un violinista e due poeti*). I lay listening to the rain several nights wondering about that. Who were the two poets and what might they recite to those soldiers, so in need of gaiety, out there on the Piave front?

It rained all the time. I was writing a book about Cézanne, and from the tower room where I worked I could see the squalls come slanting across the gulf from the plain of Paestum and the Apennines. The house we were in had thick walls and no central heating, and to keep warm we used the gas *bombolas* that are so popular in southern Italy and that bake your shins while letting your feet and hands congeal. Placed in a small room, they quickly exhaust the oxygen in the air, inducing a sick headache. Their effect on me was to lend an inebriate quality to my prose. When I read my book now, I can tell which paragraphs I wrote early in the morning, when the room and I were fresh and full of oxygen, and which ones I wrote just before lunch, when my head was oddly light and my sentences had begun to develop the staggers.

From time to time I shut off the gas, hoping to trade a little heat for an adequate oxygen supply. I discovered on those occasions that it was not just the *bombola* that made me giddy. There is something about Ravello—perhaps its elevation—that is conducive to dizziness and hallucination. The French writer Etienne Dupré, friend of Gide’s and of Colette’s, noted this when he passed through in 1926, and remarked that he had found nothing like it in all of Italy. “After a time,” he writes in his journal, “a visitor there feels . . . like the ancient sage Chuang-Tzu, who did not know when he woke from a dream whether he was a man who had dreamed he was a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming he was a man.”

I am not sure I would go so far as that, but it is true that a lot of people have been afflicted with visions in Ravello, Wagner for one (“I have found my magic garden of Klingsor!” he is supposed to have cried on his arrival) and the Roman general

Placidus Romanus for another. That extraordinary man, who lived in the second century A.D., was hunting in the valleys around Ravello one day when he looked up to see a stag standing on a precipice with a crucifix between its horns. The spectacle so unsettled him that he became a convert to Christianity, suffered martyrdom, and in due time joined the canon of saints as St. Eustacius.

Dr. Mancini told me that story. After that first visit I ran into him frequently, for he often closed his office in the late afternoon, climbed into his flashy little red Fiat sports car, and drove up to Ravello to play bocce ball with friends in a scruffy little patch of earth behind San Giovanni del Toro. He had a wife and children in Naples, somebody told me, but he also had many friends on the road, and after the weather turned warm we would sometimes see him swimming from the rocks down on the coast, accompanied by a deeply tanned American woman who sagged alarmingly out of her bikini.

He was a short, plump man of middle age, with heavy-rimmed glasses and a marked resemblance to the violinist Isaac Stern. We soon discovered that he knew everything about that coast anybody would want to know, including its local lore and

*Contro le
pulci
bisogna
la polvere
insetticida*



its bus and boat schedules. Most valuable of all, he knew the daily hour of arrival of the garbage from Amalfi. It came floating down the coast, as punctually as the steamer to Capri, at 4:20 every afternoon. Dr. Mancini advised us that if we took the 3:15 bus from Ravello we could get into the water and out before the tide of lemon rinds and chicken bones arrived and still catch the 4:45 back up to Ravello. Otherwise we risked being “sick with the garbage.”

Dr. Mancini was something of a fabulist. As we lay on the rocks or stood watching the bocce players behind San Giovanni del Toro, he recounted many odd bits of lore, some of which I jotted down. You could still find sailors in Amalfi, he said, who remembered the traditional remedy against waterspouts at sea—namely, to cut the air with a knife with a black handle and make the sign of the cross. There were peasants in the region, he said, who still saved the sacred ashes from the burning of the log (*céppo*) on Christmas Eve as a means of preventing the violent hailstorms that blow in over the mountains and threaten the citrus crop. There were others who still believed that the large white moths that appear in spring are really witches (*magara*) intent on entering the house at night and sucking the lungs of the sleeping family. It was one of the many reasons, he said, why the people on that coast will not risk opening their windows at night.

As I listened to him, I had the impression that science and the occult were battling in him, with science usually the loser. He, too, counseled against leaving windows open at night, but he disclaimed any belief in witches and mentioned vague medical hazards instead. He had a grandmother, he told me, who practiced reading the future by studying the holes eaten in cloth by mice. Once, as we stood on the rocks, I caught him studying my feet. Had I ever heard, he asked me, that to be born with a second toe longer than the big toe was to be born under a malediction? (When I asked him if he believed this, he raised his hand perpendicularly and gave that short, aspirate cry, something like an “e-e-h,” that signifies on that coast helplessness before the unfathomable.) His most curious fancy—which I think he took half seriously—was that he was im-

mortal because he had been born on Christmas Day.

Dr. Mancini knew all about ghosts, and he told me that there was supposed to be a ghost in the tower about which our house had been built. Like the other towers on that coast, it had been erected in the Middle Ages against the incursion of pirates, and in the nineteenth century, long after it had fallen into ruin, it was the scene of a celebrated murder. A local man, one Tommaso Mansi, had killed a child and thrown the body into the tower's weed-and-bramble-grown interior; he had been prompted (he later explained before a court in Salerno) by a wizard who appeared to him in a vision and promised to reveal the hiding place of pirate's gold if he delivered the soul of an innocent child. The history of the case, Dr. Mancini said, could be found in the criminal proceedings of the Tribunale di Salerno for the year 1857. There were various ways of driving a ghost from the house, he added, by invoking the aid of a rooster's blood and the hair of a black cat, but he did not advise us to try them.

It was an odd winter. The more I chatted with Dr. Mancini the more Ravello worked its spell on me. Shortly after he told me about the ghost in the tower, I began to hear strange moanings and gurgling sounds at night—and once a kind of muffled explosion. My wife, whom I awakened on such occasions, thought we were hearing the death agonies of the plumbing system, which was almost as old as the tower, but neither of us ever got up to find out. After the white moths appeared in the spring, we took to closing our windows at night.

As I toiled up Ravello's precipitous and dizzying streets, watching warily for the deluges of dishwater that fell without warning out of the sky, I began to develop that tendency to “lean into” a town that later caused me difficulty and some embarrassment on the streets of Paris and New York. Whenever I passed the butcher shop, I started with alarm at the curious sound—something between a soft shriek and a sigh—that issued from the slit throats of the spring lambs as they hung from the racks by their hind legs slowly bleeding to death. One day I looked up the sheer slope and saw a great blue heron in turtleneck sweater and Tyrolean hat beating its wings against the sky. My wife insisted that this was not, in fact, a heron but the Swiss conductor Peter Maag, who was in town to lead a Wagner concert at the Villa Rufolo and who was rehearsing his singers from a podium at the edge of the Rufolo's terrace. It is likely that she was right, although I later saw that same conductor in Paris, and he looked nothing like the apparition I had seen against the Ravello sky.

My nights were filled with odd and gaudy

*Non sembra possibile
che l'erba ricresca
in questa pianura
devastata*



dreams. One night I dreamed that it was A. L. Frothingham rather than Achille Emperaire who sat for the famous portrait that brought Cézanne his first notoriety and scandalized the Salon of 1870. Frothingham even looked like Emperaire—spindly-legged, bright-eyed, with a grotesquely swollen head and a Vandyke beard. From his open mouth came a torrent of shrieks that were sighs.

Frothingham's oddly surrealistic phrase book seemed somehow appropriate to that place and time. My wife, it is true, very early lost faith in him and bought what she called a "saner" phrase book—one that taught her to say "At what time does the train arrive?" (*A che ora arriva il treno?*) and "Have you any yellow ties, please?" (*Ha delle cravate gialle, per favore?*). I could say neither, but I was prepared, if I found myself in the wake of an alluvial flood, to remark, "It seems impossible that grass should grow again on this devastated plain" (*Non sembra possibile che l'erba ricresca in questa pianura devastata*). When I boarded the bus at the piazza to plunge down the valley of the Dragone to Amalfi, I could, if I chose, say to the driver, "If God wills, we shall return to our families" (*Se Dio vuole torneremo alle nostre famiglie*), although for the most part I refrained. I was able to say to Dr. Mancini, "If it is not true, it is well imagined" (*Se non è vero è ben trovato*), when he told me that the marks of St. Eustacius' knees could be seen in a large rock at the head of the valley where the saint had knelt to pray. Once I remarked to the grocer's wife, when she complained of the evil times, "Only the pumpkin is a head without cares" (*Solo la zucca è una testa senza preoccupazioni*), receiving from her a look of wild alarm in reply.

If Frothingham seemed at all strange to Dr. Mancini, he never said so, nor did he tell me how he came into possession of the book. (My wife surmised that it was the debris of an old love affair.) Looking at it the other day and thinking about Ravello led me in turn to the public library, where I took out William Styron's *Set This House on Fire*, which was written in Ravello and which uses the town as a setting. I wanted to see if other people were as disoriented there as I remembered being. I was relieved to find that this was apparently so. It is obvious that Styron, too, had hallucinations in Ravello: he met peasant girls of surpassing beauty who breathed the word "*amore*" as if it were a "cry from a madrigal"; he encountered crones who muttered, "I have seen the black angel; he is all around us in the night"; he heard villagers skulking in doorways hiss "*Orco!*" ("Ogre!") as he crossed the deserted piazza.

It does not matter, really, that there are no beautiful peasant girls in Ravello. No matter that a visitor there will hear no words of love in the lemon groves, no wisdom from the lips of crones,

no insults hissed from the shadows. Styron thought he saw and heard those things, as surely as Wagner saw the garden of Klingsor; I have no doubt that he believed in them as St. Eustacius believed in a stag with a crucifix and I in a heron with a Tyrolean hat. When you are there, Ravello can be terribly persuasive. I recall the night I wakened and thought that Dr. Mancini's ghost had finally materialized; it appeared to me as a constellation of wavering lights floating in the black void below

*Solo la zucca
è una testa
senza
preoccupazioni*



the end of the garden. It took my wife a half hour, I would judge, to convince me I was looking at the lights of the fishing fleet from Amalfi shining far out on the gulf.

Of course, impressions like that don't last after you leave Ravello—which is one reason, I think, why *Parsifal* is not always a persuasive opera or *Set This House on Fire* a persuasive book. My wife began talking about leaving right after I saw the ghost, and we finally got our things together and departed on the day the blood of St. Pantaleone liquefied. (There remained of the saint only a tibia, a humerus, a clavicle, and a phial of dried blood said to liquefy once a year or whenever it was brought into contact with a piece of the true cross.) Just before we left, I paid a last visit to Dr. Mancini. He was sorry to see me go ("I am all of regret," he said with exquisite courtesy), and after he had put the stopper back in the ammonia bottle, he insisted that I take Frothingham's *Simplified Italian Manual* with me as a memento of our many talks. I gave him a box of Perugina chocolates, of which he was very fond. My smile had turned grayish-yellow by the time we got to Rome, and when I reached Paris I had to have a couple of teeth filled and one extracted. The magic of that coast is real enough, but it is not exportable. □

LIFE & LETTERS

PALEFACE TAKEOVER

by Melvin Maddocks

GRAVITY'S RAINBOW
by Thomas Pynchon
Viking, \$15.00 and \$4.95

THE SUNLIGHT DIALOGUES
by John Gardner (illustrated by
John Napper)
Knopf, \$8.95

Philip Rahv once divided American novelists into two camps: palefaces and redskins. The paleface was "highbrow," fond of ambiguities, prey to exquisite scruples. His attitude was inclined to be European, his prose style mandarin. His stories, favoring allegory and symbols, could be praised as subtle or damned as bloodless.

In two words, Henry James.

The redskin novelist, on the other hand, was "lowbrow," a cultist of experience, dedicated to the most exact, the most intense representation of How Things Are. Looking about him at shelves full of Hemingway, Steinbeck, Wolfe, Dreiser, and Sinclair Lewis, Rahv had no doubt that the redskins were carrying the day. "Everything is contained in the American novel," he concluded, "except ideas."

How radically the balance has changed in a single generation! One need only drop the names of Saul Bellow and John Updike, card-carrying intellectuals if not amateur scholars; then there is Donald Barthelme, the philosophy major, and William Gass, the philosophy professor, to name just two more. *Gravity's Rainbow* and *The Sunlight Dia-*

logues seem to confirm the last phase of the swing from the one polarization to the other. Quite different books, they join to proclaim a fact that critics and general readers have been rather tardy to acknowledge. After all those tours of World Wars I and II, after all those on-the-road reports from Paris, Greenwich Village, and Main Street, after all the novels of experience by ex-soda jerks, ex-lumberjacks, ex-seamen (consult dust jackets), American fiction is becoming an essay form: a commentary with a plot, a genre whose primary raw material is, in fact, ideas.

If indeed the novel has arrived at a new Age of the Paleface, one could not ask for more brilliant exemplars than Pynchon and Gardner. As readers of his first novel *V* (1963) can attest, Pynchon is an enormously well informed man. *Gravity's Rainbow* is a 760-page affidavit that he knows his Freud, he knows his Pavlov, he knows his comparative religions, he knows his rocket technology. He can write a gloss on Abraham and Isaac or a program note on forties jazz. He is equally up on mandalas and Deanna Durbin movies. He is perhaps the only novelist alive who would use a sine curve as a metaphor for life, complete with the appropriate formula. (Little is known of Pynchon—the American novel's answer to Howard Hughes—except that he was graduated from Cornell, with a B.A., in 1959.)

Pynchon appears almost too re-

sourceful. His prose is gusty, propulsive, sputtering as a last resort into Brechtian verse or the shorthand of one-act playlets. It is as if he were trying to say everything at once, on every page. One has the impression that inside his head is a movie screen on which an endless series of very funny and very ghastly one-reelers is being projected: *Pynchon Presents World War II*, with radioactive custard pies for a cast of thousands and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse chased by Keystone Kops.

The antihero of *Gravity's Rainbow*—even that designation sounds too positive—is Tyrone Slothrop, an American lieutenant stationed in London during the Blitz. Slothrop is a Harvard classmate of Jack Kennedy's, and among dozens of other tours de force (including the biography of an electric light bulb named Byron), Pynchon produces a letter from Mom Slothrop to Ambassador Kennedy. An excerpt is worth quoting for a taste of Pynchon's high-spirited despair:

Well hi Joe how've ya been. Listen: Jew-zeppy—we're getting edgy about our youngest again. Would you try bothering a few of those jolly old London connections just *once more?* (Promise!!) Even if it's old news it'll be good news for Poppy and I. I still remember what you said when the awful word about the PT boat came in, before you knew how Jack was. I'll never forget your words then. It's every parent's dream, Joe, that it is.

Oh, and Hozay (whoops, don't

mind that, the pen just skidded as you can see! Naughty Nalline's on her *third* martini, we'll have you know), Poppy and I heard your wonderful speech at the GE plant over in Pittsfield the other week. You're in the groove, Mister K! How true! we've *got* to modernize in Massachusetts, or it'll just keep getting worse and worse. . . . It isn't starting to break down, is it, Joe? Sometimes, you know these fine Boston Sundays, when the sky over the Hill is broken into clouds, the way white bread appears through a crust you hold at your thumbs and split apart. . . . You know, don't you? Golden clouds? Sometimes I think—ah, Joe, I think they're pieces of the Heavenly City falling down. I'm sorry—didn't mean this to get so gloomy all so sudden, it's just . . . but it *isn't* beginning to fall apart, is it, my old fellow Harvard-parent? Sometimes things aren't very clear, that's all.

As the last of this quotation hints, Pynchon, for all his antics, is a theologian, laying out the road to damnation. Damnation is his *idea*. Slothrop figures as Pynchon's hellish parody on manipulated—that is, modernly damned—man. The Lieutenant becomes the equipment of PISCES (Psychological Intelligence Schemes for Expediting Surrender) when his bizarre gift is discovered: Slothrop erections anticipate German rocket launchings. *Gravity's Rainbow* serves as Pynchon's occasionally nauseous measure of twentieth-century degradation. (One passage of virtuosic scatology might be described as the Great Toilet Flush: five pages long.) For Pynchon, as presumably for Slothrop, the supreme obscenity is that ordinary people are "willing to have life defined for them by men whose only talent is for death."

In his desperate attempts to avoid being taken over as a pure instrument, Slothrop runs for it, from London to the Riviera to Berlin, pursued by Furies disguised as baggy-pants comedians. He survives tries at assassination and even castration (they get the wrong man). He masks himself in a pig costume. He hides, like the last caveman, in the hills. But the more he runs, the more he blurs the personhood he hopes to save. Gradually Slothrop becomes his own myth, his own abstraction, finally known only as

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March Report on

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The mix is formidable—a gifted writer, a concerned citizen, an aroused idealist, a master of her subject. **SHIRLEY HAZZARD** shows herself to be all these in her new book **DEFEAT OF AN IDEAL: The Self-Destruction of the United Nations**. The universal disillusionment that the very name of the organization now gives rise to has been summed up in Solzhenitsyn's Nobel Prize acceptance address of 1972: "A quarter of a century ago, with great hopes from all mankind, the United Nations Organization was born. Alas, in an immoral world it too grew up immoral." Miss Hazzard, drawing upon a wealth of documentation hitherto unexhumed or else discreetly soft-pedaled, looks deep into the "ingrown, self-propagating bureaucracy" of the Secretariat itself, and traces from within the dramatic course of the U.N.'s "growing up immoral."

It is a dismaying history, enlivened in the telling by the pungency of Miss Hazzard's style and the psychological acuteness of her analysis. Her portraits of Trygve Lie and Dag Hammarskjöld, and her summaries of the administrations of Lie, Hammarskjöld, and U Thant are masterly. Her conclusions, however controversial, are grounded in historical evidence and are inevitable in their logic. Her book, proposing a new world organization acting on behalf of all mankind, is no less than a plea for human survival.

DEFEAT OF AN IDEAL

The Self-Destruction of
the United Nations

by Shirley Hazzard

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LITTLE, BROWN

Rocketman. For what Pynchon is staging is the tragicomedy of modern man engineering himself into a thing, damned to become one with his own machinery, only "in love with his, and his race's, death."

At his worst, Pynchon is the scat singer of Apocalypse, making one-line jokes about the *I Ching*, indulging himself in whimsy on the First International Runcible Spoon Fight. But at its best, *Gravity's Rainbow* is a kind of American *Dog Years*. Like Günter Grass, like Hieronymus Bosch, Pynchon has the power to make death seem as vital as life itself. As "fantasist-surrogate," he assumes the reader's case of the cosmic horrors and manages them for him. Is this called "therapy" or "moral vision"? No matter—it is a frightening and extraordinary talent.

Pynchon reminds his reader of precedents. One can make one's own list, starting with the Marx Brothers and Nathanael West. John Gardner, though less obviously experimental and less savage, may be, finally, farther out. *The Sunlight Dialogues* represents the ultimate metamorphosis in the Great American Novel, redskin-style. Could a Rahv redskin have imagined that one of the most praised novelists of the seventies would be a professor of Old and Middle English at Southern Illinois University?

The Sunlight Dialogues is a philosophical novel, a label which used to turn publishers pale and make even critics protest that the two words formed a contradiction in terms. The novel's set pieces include, for instance, a scholarly ramble through Mesopotamia and an analytical sermon on law and order, delivered by an escaped criminal to a policeman in an otherwise empty church.

Four pages are required to list the characters in the novel, nearly ninety of them. They can be memorable on their own, like the Woodworth sisters, two perky recluses of 108 and 97. Often they seem to wear faces for themes, their bodies significant with ailments.

The two principal characters—the dialogue makers—are an old police chief named Clumly, at the point of retirement, and a mysterious stranger in his jail called the Sunlight Man, who has been arrested

for painting love across a highway. Like a proper allegory, Gardner's novel operates on two levels. In its frame of realism, *The Sunlight Dialogues* takes place in Batavia, New York, in 1966. The Sunlight Man proves to be a member of a prominent local family, and in his detailed chronicling of the generations of Hodges, Gardner can perform like a veritable Galsworthy toward his Forsytes.

But, like a morality play, the novel constantly moves from specific people and events toward a sort of staged warfare of good and evil. Clumly is the last tired Apollonian, struggling fecklessly to enforce the law's jots and tittles as small boys let the air out of his tires and, in fact, the old American order deflates about him. The Sunlight Man, a poet, a magician, is in essence a daemonic figure: the embodiment of all that is newly restless, newly rebellious in the American spirit.

Abstracting his antagonists into Old Testament soul-types, Gardner suggests Clumly is a rabbinical keeper of commandments, insisting that "a man can renounce himself"—his very nature—and become "responsible for obeying laws, performing his duties." On the other hand, the Sunlight Man is heir to the Babylonian imperative "that one remain free." Breaking out of jail, he preaches and practices this dangerous absolute, spreading blood, fire, and cataclysmic confusion in his wake—making love, as it were, to the profound disorder in others.

Gardner quotes from the Second Epistle of Timothy: "In the last days perilous times shall come." But in the end, the Sunlight Man—is he a failed Messiah or a successful Lucifer?—falters before those very Hanging-loose Gardens of Babylon that ought to be an answer to his call to anarchy: "The Playboy philosophy. The Ginsberg terror. . . . The sexual revolution you read about—all those West Coast surfers and beatniks and Berkeley students. . . ."

And in the end, Gardner too falters between his alternatives: between his half-mad Dionysian prophet of self-fulfillment and what, in his last novel, *Grendel*, he called the "patternmakers." He concludes with a rather ubiquitous prayer: "God be kind to all Good Samari-

tans and also bad ones. For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." This is admirable as a sentiment. But for a philosophical novel, 673 pages long, it is not a good enough *idea* to journey toward, to close upon. It is too intellectually ecumenical, so to speak, hardly more comforting, if that is the intent, than Pynchon's sardonic big-bang ending.

Why do both these excellent novels leave a reader dissatisfied? For all their remarkable energy, for all their superb resources of intellect and imagination, they never quite make their point—even the point, in Pynchon's case, that there may be no point. For all their sophistication, these novels of ideas end explicitly where the novels of experience used to begin implicitly—with

the knowledge of death, with what Gardner terms the threatened vast insignificance of life. At that moment, the redskins know what to do. They dig in and make a fine art out of dying well. They give us El Sordo on the hilltop or that archetypal Old Man with his Moby-Dick fish. Gardner and Pynchon give us their speculations. What the reader ends up with is their heroic ambition to arrive at a *theory*.

One cannot quarrel. Both kinds of novel are invaluable for what they are—as well as frustrating for what they are not. Palefaces and redskins alike follow the hoariest of novelist's maxims: Write About What You Know. But what a wide definition of art and of knowledge is spanned by their contrasting results!

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE AMERICAN

by X. J. Kennedy

BRAVING THE ELEMENTS
by James Merrill
Atheneum, \$5.95

COLLECTED POEMS: 1951-1971
by A. R. Ammons
Norton, \$12.50

Braving the Elements is James Merrill's sixth collection of poems. Ever since 1951, when his work first surfaced, people have been observing that Merrill has great skill—an observation about as useful as pointing out that a whale in the sea has a lot of swimming ability. It has taken a while to realize that, for all his technical dexterity, Merrill also carries a good deal of meaning; and that his craft is never displayed merely for its own sake. If there were some justice in Merrill's being branded as a courtly poet without a court, his later poems have grown more evidently personal and more adventurous. Although he received the National Book Award in 1967 for a previous collection, *Nights and Days*, Merrill has not been stamped by readers. At least, his publishers complain in a jacket blurb that he has done his work with "singularly little attention." Now that he has been awarded the Bollingen Prize in Poetry, perhaps the situation will change. It is surely high

time for readers of poetry to discover Merrill and to find out what rewards are coming to them.

Merrill may well be our subtlest examiner of waking nightmares, some of them apparently his own. The usual protagonist of a Merrill poem is an individual who bears (I suspect) certain likenesses to Merrill himself: a less innocent Lambert Strether moving uneasily through an era of hard acid rock and public assassinations. Sensitive, middle-aging, he skims along the border of his society, skeptical of self-dramatizing public statesmen, distrustful of the daily newspaper and its "bulletin-pocked columns," unwilling to be Aquarianized by his counterculture neighbors. He accompanies his mother on a trip to her safe deposit box, only to decline a ring she offers to his eventual bride:

I do not tell her, it would sound theatrical,
Indeed this green room's mine, my very life.
We are each other's; there will be no wife;
The little feet that patter here are metrical.

As these lines suggest, Merrill generally prefers to write in traditional stanzas and measures, restoring life to them. He does so, certainly, not out of any craven unwillingness to

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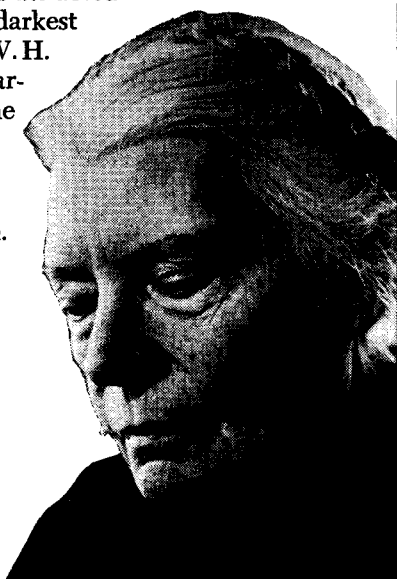
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experiment: see his previous poetry collection *The Fire Screen*, and his technically radical novel *The (Diblos) Notebook*. His mastery of forms, whether new or old, keeps his self-revelatory poems (and some of them are painful) from the worst lapses of recent poets of the confessional school. Merrill never sprawls, never flails about, never strikes postures. Intuitively he knows that, as Yeats once pointed out, in poetry "all that is personal soon rots; it must be packed in ice or salt."

A superiority of Merrill's is that, along with a crushing burden of sophistication, he carries a childlike freshness of observation, a certain ability to look back into his boyhood with detachment. I have long been fond of Merrill's poems written from a child's point of view (especially those in *Water Street*), and although "Days of 1935" may not be the most profound poem in this new lot, it strikes me as immensely funny and warm: an ironic ballad whose hero, a poor little rich kid, weaves gorgeous daydreams of being kidnapped like the Lindbergh baby, by a spit-curved Bonnie and her gun-toting Clyde. This poem, and also a moving two-part narrative called "Up and Down," might well make gateways for new readers into Merrill's work.

There are richer, more difficult poems: "In Nine Sleep Valley," "18 West 11th Street." Especially attractive is "The Victor Dog" (dedicated to Elizabeth Bishop), one of several new poems that concentrate upon the Muse, upon the sufferings she exacts from those who follow her. It is a work of splendid wit, a meditation upon the trademark Fido listening to his master's voice; and it ends: "Art is art. / The life it asks of us is a dog's life." In "Dreams About Clothes," Merrill raises a few objections to Art itself:

Tell me something, Art.
You know what it's like
Awake in your dry hell
Of volatile synthetic solvents.
Won't you help us brave the elements
Once more, of terror, anger, love?
Seeing there's no end to wear and tear
Upon the lawless heart,
Won't you as well forgive
Whoever settles for the immaterial?
Don't you care how we live?

Although readers may be about to catch up with Merrill, as they caught up with Wallace Stevens, I don't expect him to become popular, or even academically fashionable. His view of the universe is essentially grim: in "Mandala," all creation is seen spinning down into a whirlpool of extinction, never to return. If it weren't for Merrill's humor, his compassion, his magnificent art, he might seem a poet of dead ends, a cold fish, an admirable but completely unlovable artificer. As he is, however (and you must read him for yourself), I consider him one of the few living Americans fit to represent us if the supper table of Parnassus were to be set this very night. You could trust him to sit down, without disgracing his native roots, in the company of Rilke and Laforgue, and to hold up his end of the conversation.

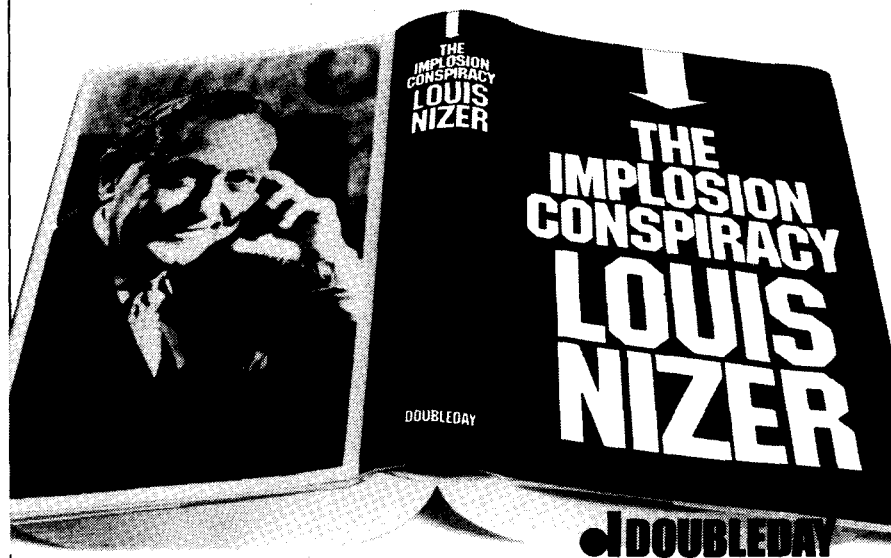
The poems of A. R. Ammons say "Made in U.S.A." all over them. Reading his *Collected Poems: 1951-1971*, you'll recognize Whitman, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams among his ancestors. It isn't that Ammons is quite like any of them, but that his work is whittled from the same timber. He's a homemade visionary, a generous risk-taker, a singer with ample wind in his lungs, an appreciative chewer of native speech.

Apparently some of this speech came along with Archie Randolph Ammons from his early years in North Carolina, where he grew up on a farm in the "low-south country," went to a Baptist college, and later served as principal of a grade school on the Outer Banks. In two Carolina "Said-Songs" he gives us the monologues of two fine Tarheel talkers. Other poems refer to things like *bumfuzzlement*, *cottonpicking conniptions*, *crows' younglings*, somebody's *old eat-up woman*, something *slick as a mudcat's fin*. Ammons' flair for speech is clear from a poem with a wonderful title: "If Anything Will Level with You, Water Will."

Like Whitman, Ammons revels in the vocabulary of science; but unlike the sage of Camden, Ammons knows the meanings of his words. It may be due to the fact that before returning to teaching (he is now at Cornell) he spent nine years as an

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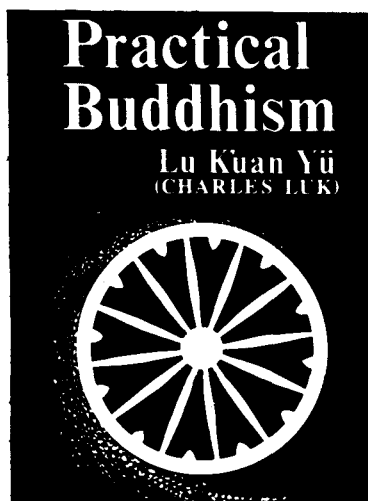
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JOURNEY TO IXTLAN

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executive for a biological glassware firm. Who but Ammons would dream of opening a little spring poem like this?

The caryophyllaceae
like a scroungy
frost are
rising through the lawn:
many-fingered as leggy
copepods . . .

In what I take to be a love poem, Ammons fears that (in the diction of the auto body shop) he has "m-mocked and begommed" his loved one, as if she had fenders. He brings to the world of living creatures the eye of a professional. "Man's a plant parasite," he notices; and reports that an earthworm he found under a leaf "panicked at both ends / with the threat of drying out."

Ammons is fond of rather arbitrary unities. In his book-length *Tape for the Turn of the Year* (not in the collection), he once set himself the task of writing a poem on a ribbon of adding-machine paper. Not surprisingly, it ran a little thin. Another earlier book, *Briefings*, arranged all its poems in alphabetical order by first lines. Lately, as did Stevens, Ammons has picked up the challenge of the long verse-essay; and these *Collected Poems* include three such attempts: "Extremes and Moderations," "Essay on Poetics," and longest of all, "Hibernaculum," a winter meditation in 112 trios of tercets. Each of these huge old lunkers is punctuated as though it were one long sentence: colon: after colon: after colon. The form supplies Ammons with a wide expanse, but something about them seems laid out and gone ahead with rather than grown. Like Williams, who'd make poetry out of documents and statistics, Ammons incorporates an itemized car repair bill, a business note about scheduling English classes. It is as if he were trying to prove how much dull junk his barge can triumphantly float. So far, among Ammons' greatest victories have been poems of middling length: "Hardweed Path Going," "Cascadilla Falls," "February Beach," and in particular "Corsons Inlet," a poem that affirms that to live in the world is to accept risk and change, curve instead of straight line.

Ammons writes from inner need

because, as he says, "poems connect the threads between the tuft of his head / and the true water . . . like roots to a turf." He works hard not to let the wondrous multiplicity of the world pass unnoticed by him. He stands above the present-day crowd of poets in his wisdom, his humorous view of himself, his unfaltering ear, his attractive humility. In one hilarious poem of a sequence (each beginning "I can tell you what I need"), Ammons longs for "a phalanx of enthusiasts, driving a spearhead / or one or two of those big amphibian trucks / through the peopled ocean of my neglect." To read this gigantic book is to join the phalanx.

MANOS KARASTEFANIS

Death took my father.
The same year (I was twelve)
Thanási's mother taught me
Heaven and hell.

None of my army buddies
Called me by name—
Just "Styles" or "Fashion Plate."
One friend I had, my body;

And, evenings at the gym
Contending with another,
Used it to isolate
Myself from him.

The doctor saved my knee.
You came to the clinic
Bringing *War and Peace*,
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Why are you smiling?
I fought fair, I fought well,
Not hurting my opponent,
To win this black belt.

Why are you silent?
I've brought you a white cheese
From my island, and the sea's
Voice in a shell.

by James Merrill

THE PERIPATETIC REVIEWER

by Edward Weeks

THE GASP
by Romain Gary
Putnam's, \$6.95

A French novelist, born in Russia in 1914, Romain Gary is as fluent in English as in his native tongue. He is probably best remembered for *A European Education*, *The Roots of Heaven*, and *The Company of Men*. Most of his novels have been satires in which, for all their wit and humor, one hears a lament for the lost dignity of man, a note which is struck repeatedly and with increasing force in his new book. Paris is the base for this story, which flits from Rome, to Peking, to the Pentagon, with cosmopolitan familiarity traceable to Gary's early profession as a diplomat. He is a complete internationalist who can give the boot to all of them.

In Paris a group of scientists known as the Cercle Érasme are intent on harnessing a new form of energy: at the last gasp, at the moment of a person's death, a throbbing amount of energy is released, and the problem they are solving is how to capture and contain it, and to apply the power to practical use. Rumor of their experiment horrifies the Pope and leads to much resistance from the papacy; as the news spreads, it has a revolting effect on the laity. The mastermind of the French scientists, Marc Mathieu, is himself so appalled at the possibilities that he seeks escape in alcohol in Tahiti. But he realizes that a technological secret of such portentousness would be seized by all the great powers, and, wrestling with himself as did the nuclear scientists in the early stages of the hydrogen bomb, he resumes his leadership in Paris, aware that he is now a target for both the CIA and the Russians.

The Chinese, of course, become the object of greatest suspicion—in the early days when Mao says that he wishes his energy to be converted into light for the school-rooms, all is benevolent and the peasants place wreaths on the "gaspers" (the containers of the new

power) as if in ancestor worship. But when the pictures harvested by the satellite over the province of Sinkiang show that there is a large interconnection of the gaspers, the world begins to panic at the thought of what will be done with such a vast accumulation of energy. The Pentagon itself knows that the American attempt at such a liberation has shocking results. Despite his alcoholic withdrawals, despite the remonstrances of his beautiful American wife—"Golly, Marc, why don't you work on something nice for a while!"—Mathieu accepts that he must pursue the discovery to its ultimate installation.

Suave, sophisticated in his knowledge of international folly, adroit in his characterization of Chairman Mao, Colonel Starr of the CIA, Valenti, the conscientious physicist, and of Albert-the-Citroën (one of the early victims of the experiment), so amusing on the surface and so threatening beneath, Romain Gary is one of the few writers who can have fun with a mean subject.

A WOMAN NAMED SOLITUDE
by André Schwarz-Bart
Atheneum, \$5.95

A stylist, slow and fastidious in his craft, André Schwarz-Bart was awarded the Prix Goncourt for his first book, *The Last of the Just*. His novels are like miniatures painted on ivory, and, perhaps because the author himself was a member of the Maquis who had been deported to an extermination camp and escaped, his stories are poignant with the cruelty which men inflict on one another.

This new book begins with a little black girl by the name of Bayangumay, born in a remote estuary in West Africa in 1755. On the day of her birth she is promised to an old friend of her father's in memory of a happy hunting expedition they had shared in the mountains. But as she matures, she teases and attracts a boy of her own age, Komobo, and it is she who tempts him to steal

away for their short idyll upriver. On the third day she announces, "Komobo, I must go to my wedding." They return and, after the anger of the tribe has been appeased and she has given proof of her virginity, she becomes the wife of the old man. It is then that her captivity begins.

Soon after the marriage their camp is raided by the slave hunters, her husband is killed, and she is cramped and locked in the stinking misery of the French ship bound for the island of Guadeloupe. Midway in the voyage the women are released from their chains, are washed, and then given over to the tender mercies of the crew. It is thus that she becomes pregnant and eventually the mother of a mulatto girl called "Solitude," a child with green eyes and uncommon beauty.

Solitude's mother had been a wilding, as the white men said, and Solitude herself resists the regime on the du Parcs' plantation. From the first, she is slow to speak: her stammering, her faraway look, her lack of subservience prevent her from being the house servant or comely mistress that her white owners would have liked. She is sold and resold and battered, and in her proud, lonely career she epitomizes in touching detail the fortitude of the half-caste amidst the punishing slavery of the eighteenth century.

MEMOIR OF A REVOLUTIONARY
by Milovan Djilas
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$12.00

Montenegrins, whether they be dancers, writers, clowns, or rebels, are the most irrepressible of the six nationals of Yugoslavia over whom Tito has presided with almost unbelievable calm, given the past history of the Balkans. Milovan Djilas, one of Tito's most trusted and fiery aides in the critical years of World War II, was vice president of Yugoslavia until his expulsion from the Communist Party in 1954. As a revolutionary student, he was imprisoned for three years by the monarchy in the 1930s and, since his break with his old boss, has twice been imprisoned for his outspoken opinions, reason enough for writing this memoir, which, incidentally, has been admirably translated by Drenka Willen.

Of peasant stock with a force that sprang from the naked rocks of his mountain home, he was determined to study journalism at the University of Belgrade. On the long bus trip he paused at Cetinje, where his brother, Aleksa, was doing his military service. They walked the night hours, pooling their resentment against society, and next morning at Sarajevo he exchanged his shabby clothing for a cheap new suit, the first he had ever owned with matching pants, "and felt ready to become a writer."

The Great Depression of 1929, with its grave consequences to the peasants, had been followed by the dictatorship imposed by King Alexander, but in Belgrade the cafés were full and people were drinking "as if the world were submerged in prosperity." Some drank out of anger and despair because the political life of the people had been stifled. It is notable that this early he formed his lifelong aversion to alcohol, an aversion which was to keep him clearheaded and critical years later in his *Conversations with Stalin*. He did not study much, he tells us, and put off learning Russian, which he did not master until he was in prison. He did read Marx, but Dostoevsky was the inspiration for the short stories he was publishing; and he was unruly, interrupting the class on poetry to invite everyone to join him in a strike. Professor Košutic forgave him; he was, says Djilas, a poor poet but a good teacher. And it was in this class that he came to know Mitra, slender,

pale, with large black eyes, the first girl he had ever been attracted to.

Their love was to sustain him as he took the lead in the dark discontent which gave rise to his generation of revolutionaries. He narrowly missed being captured in the first uprising of 1931, from which he fled to the country; when he returned, half ashamed, he was to find demonstrations of an aimless nature in progress, and he realized that the atmosphere was ripe for Communism. His recognition of a national aim, and his belief in Tito and the personal power so essential to the movement, were clear in his mind as early as 1938. In the fighting against the Nazis (he lost his father, two brothers, and two sisters), when the King had fled the country and Belgrade was in a shambles, there was no hope left for the old military machine. As he puts it, "If Tito, that is we Communists, were to set out to fight for power, to take over the army and the war, Tito had to speak openly." And he did.

There are two obvious impediments in such a long work: the Yugoslav names which are difficult to remember and re-identify, and the many splinter movements that rise and fall. Despite these distractions, the first person singular is a commanding presence. Here then is the training for the furious days that followed, in which the Partisans fought a civil war, secured British aid, and finally threw the Germans out. How early the disillusion set in which caused his resignation from the Party and prompted the re-ordering of his thoughts in *The New Class* is a question one hopes he will deal with in a sequel to this strong and personal memoir.

WILD PITCH
by A. B. Guthrie, Jr.
Houghton Mifflin, \$5.95

Ever since he was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard, with a year in which to test his ability as a fiction writer, A. B. Guthrie, Jr., has enjoyed the toil of a novelist and the rewards that rolled in after the publication of his picturesque novel of mountain men, *The Big Sky*. His new book, *Wild Pitch*, is of a later day and more restricted, a story of two murders perpetrated in the cow country the author knows so well,

once open, but now fenced and interspersed with an occasional dude ranch, and retired folk like Professor Hawthorne, whose daughter is pretty enough to make any man look twice.

The story follows the reasoning of Jason Beard, a lanky youth, the pitcher for the town team, and the unpaid helper of the sheriff, Chick Charleston, whom he enormously admires. Jase, as the town calls him, accompanies the sheriff on his rounds, taking along a baseball to squeeze when there is no action, and making mental note of such interrogation as the sheriff wants reported. Jase is handy for odd jobs, and, along with his loyalty and self-importance, he has a capacity for detection, not unerring, but persistent. Too young for the badge he would like to wear, he is a good kid to have along.

The sheriff's office goes into high gear when Buster Hogue gets a bullet in his head, shot from ambush, at the town picnic. Hogue, one of the least popular men in the county, has made plenty of enemies in building up his stake of fifteen thousand acres and in letting his cattle feed on the grass of his neighbors. But he has emerged from his quarrels thus far with a whole hide. Now he hovers on the danger list and while Sheriff Charleston and his hanger-on are searching for clues, Hogue's hostile neighbor, Ben Day, on the way to his mailbox, is tracked down and killed. There are no tears shed over him either, least of all by his abused wife, but when Hogue dies and there are no arrests, the State Crime Investigator comes from the city to add his brutal, blundering pressure to the search. It is Jason with his quick eye who finds the two cartridges, both fired by a Savage .303, a rifle which Professor Hawthorne acknowledges has been stolen from his valuable collection of old guns. He is the first of several suspects.

These are the crimes and the mystery. Like a young beagle, Jase follows a good many false scents before he ever sees a rabbit. The modest story is told mostly in the Western lingo, more amusing because of the constant ribbing to which the amateur sleuth is subjected. But Jase is not a fool, and when he has to move fast, his aim is good.

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SHORT REVIEWS: BOOKS

by Phoebe Adams

DO YOU HEAR THEM? by Nathalie Sarraute. Braziller, \$5.95. Nathalie Sarraute's novels are so infinitely refined that they sometimes become lengthy accounts of nothing at all. Her latest work is of another and more rewarding order. The technique consists of minute variations in repetitions of the same trivial incident, but the result is a shrewd, ultimately moving analysis of the rift between parents and children, extended to the rift between present and past. Translated by Maria Jolas.

THE WILD HUNT by Harry Brown. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$6.95. The hunt is not only wild, it is fantastic, and in the course of it Mr. Brown spoofs, parodies, or burlesques very nearly all the respected clichés of current fiction. The bigger the target, the harder he hits. This is fine disrespectful fun.

A COMPUTER PERSPECTIVE by the office of Charles & Ray Eames. Harvard University Press, \$15.00. A picture book, based on an exhibition sponsored by IBM, covering the development of calculating machines from the early nineteenth century to 1950. It will not teach anyone how to build or operate a computer, but it is full of interesting and unexpected information.

THE DEVIL TREE by Jerzy Kosinski. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$6.95. Mr. Kosinski's hero is a poor little rich boy whose money can buy him anything except happiness. Even if the tale is taken as a metaphor for American society, and granting full credit for a fashionable profusion of improprieties, there is a whiff of roast chestnut about this scheme.

A CLOSER LOOK AT ARIEL: A MEMORY OF SYLVIA PLATH by Nancy Hunter Steiner. Harper's Magazine Press, \$5.00. Mrs. Steiner was a college friend and roommate of the girl who was later to write fine poetry and, finally, to kill herself. These memories are sympathetic and particularly valuable in

providing an outsider's factual view of some of the episodes fictionalized in Plath's autobiographical novel.

A CHILDHOOD IN PRISON by Pyotr Yakir. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, \$5.95. The author's father, an army commander, was shot on false charges in 1937, one of the many victims of Stalin's purge of what he imagined were traitors. The son was locked up as a "socially dangerous element" and spent five angry years in various prisons. His account of these places is predictably horrifying. It is also varied, for each prison had its own character and most of them permitted, at times, a considerable and even comic freedom of action inside the walls. Mr. Yakir picked up, and now passes along, some notable behind-the-scenes information about the whole period. Possibly as a result of this book, he is, on the latest information, once more under arrest.

N. C. WYETH by Douglas Allen and Douglas Allen, Jr. Crown, \$25.00 to February 28, \$29.95 thereafter. The Allens have written an admiring tribute to the elder Wyeth, but the greatest charm of this book is, naturally, the reproductions of posters, calendars, magazine covers, and fondly remembered book illustrations. Wyeth's females were always costumed sticks, but with the like of Long John Silver, he was a wonder. Bibliography, notes, index.

AMERICAN MISCHIEF by Alan Lelchuk. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$8.95. In this novel, Cardozo College (the author works at Brandeis) suffers a lecherous dean (read academic establishment) and a coprophilic reformer (read student radicals). The sexual and cloacal detail is interminably explicit; the both-your-houses conclusion, a self-righteous banality.

THE DARK FIELDS OF VENUS by Basile Yanovsky. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$7.95. Dr. Yanovsky kept a "logbook" on his work in venereal disease clinics in New York City. His text consists of short sketches of the patients and records of his conversations with them. The patients, most of whom explain their predicament with "You know how it is . . ." quickly become monotonous, but the doctor's peppery, exasperated

opinions do not. In a time awash with permissive sympathy, it is refreshing to come upon a man who has the nerve to believe: (a) anyone above the grade of halfwit should be able to avoid syphilis; (b) anyone, including halfwits, should know how to wash; (c) public clinics should be clean, efficient, and economical.

MANAGERS AND MAGIC by Graham Cleverley. Dutton, \$7.95. The author argues that the greater part of business management activity is useless, irrational ritual, and proves it with a wealth of anthropological parallel. The notion is amusing for about one hundred pages, or half the length of the book.

SMOKESCREEN by Dick Francis. Harper & Row, \$5.95. Mr. Francis' amiable purpose is, as usual, to scare his readers half to death, and he has contrived an episode in a mine that is likely to scare claustrophobics all the way.

AMNESTY OF JOHN DAVID HERNDON by James Reston. McGraw-Hill, \$5.95. Mr. Reston describes the maneuvers involved in returning Herndon, a military deserter, from France to this country. The object of Herndon's voluntary return was to create a public, legal confrontation with the authorities on the whole question of amnesty for men refusing to fight (again, in Herndon's case) in Vietnam, and the project came to nothing because the Army neatly crumpled out. The book is therefore anticlimactic, but of value as a description of how deserters live abroad and what sort of people they are.

THE FAMILY COOKBOOK: FRENCH by Alvin Kerr. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, \$9.95. Three hundred-odd recipes running from canapés to coffee, clearly presented and calling for a minimum of exotica. This is a good, handy cookbook.

CROSSING OVER AND OTHER TALES by Richard Elman. Scribner's, \$6.95. A story from this collection was printed in the December *Atlantic*.

THE RETREAT OF AMERICAN POWER by Henry Brandon. Doubleday, \$7.95. A portion of this book appeared in the January *Atlantic*.

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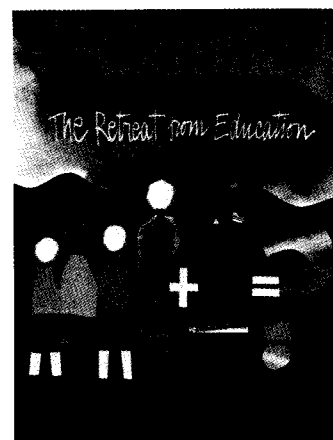
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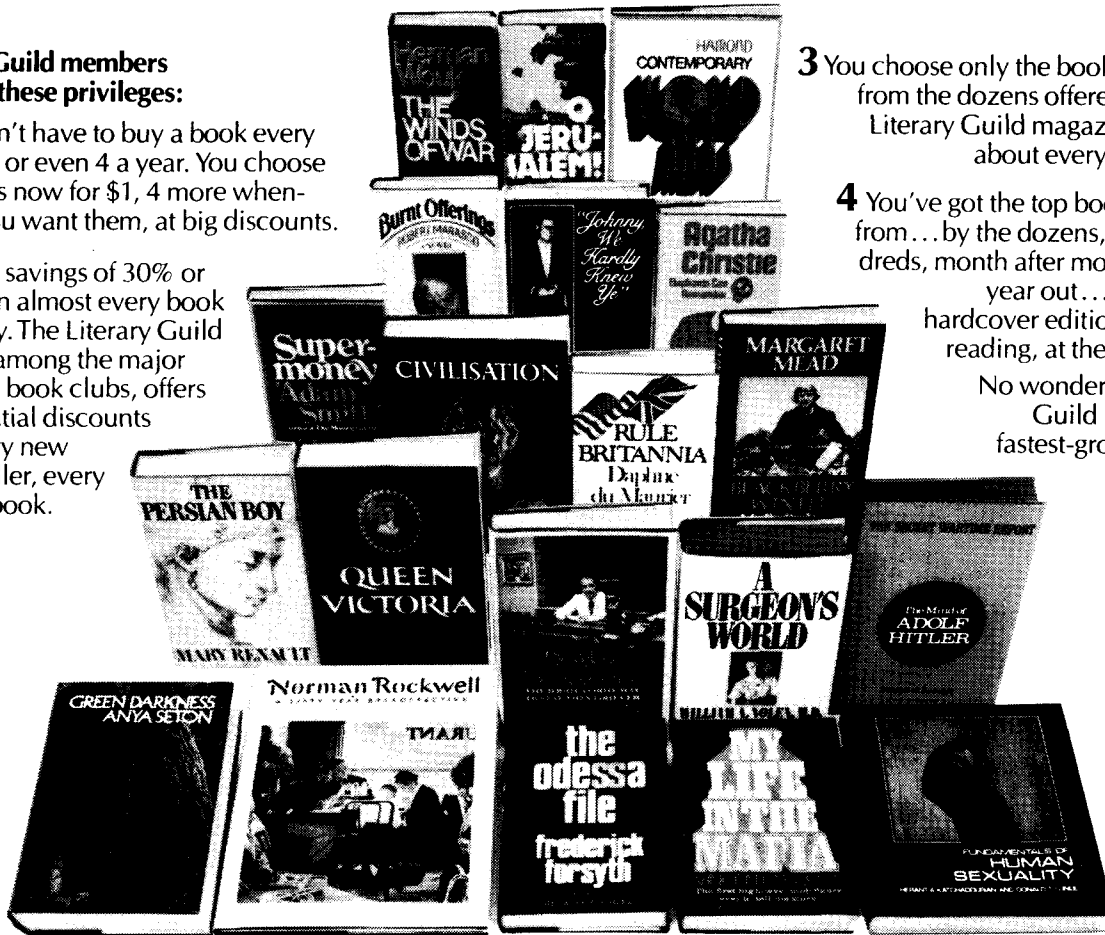
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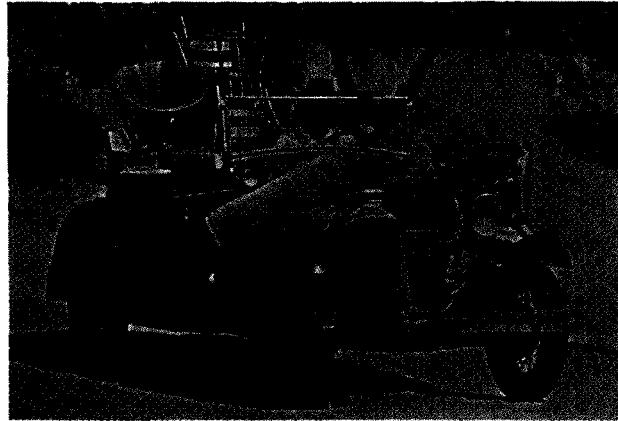
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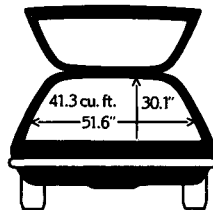


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But if you had to bring along much more than a toothbrush, it took a lot of imagination. And rope.

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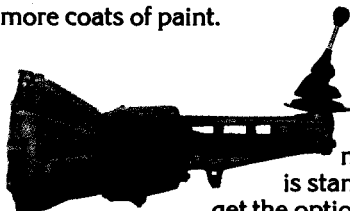
Better idea for safety... buckle up!



The Pinto engine (left) was improved and perfected in over 10 years of actual driving in small Ford-built cars all over the world.

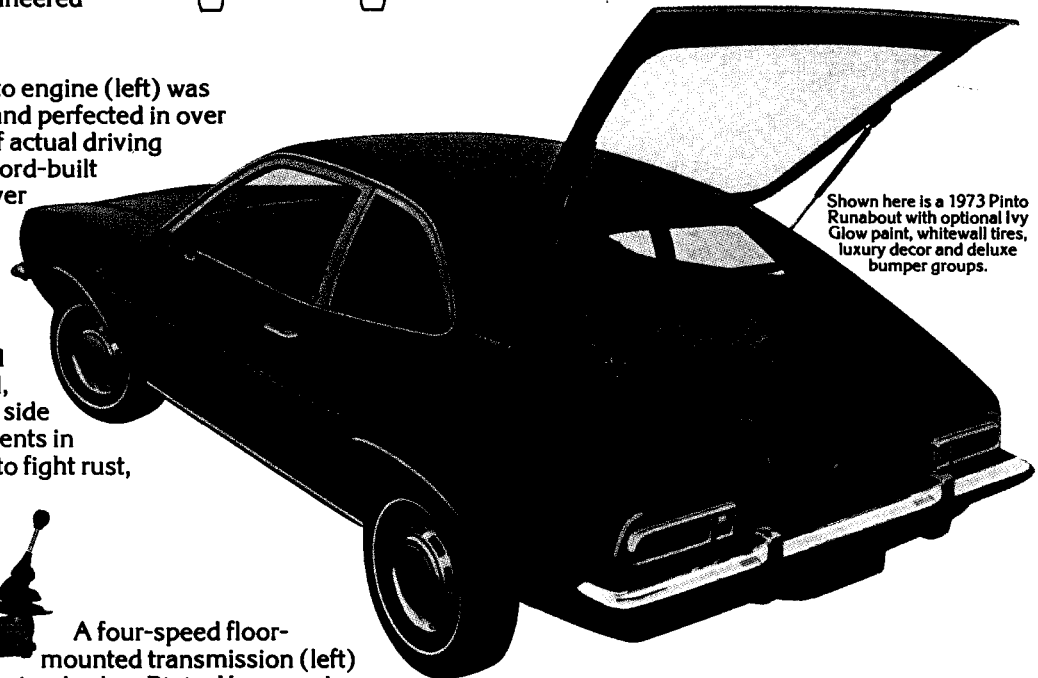
It's easy on gas, simple to maintain.

The Pinto body is welded into one solid piece of steel, with steel guard rails in the side doors and steel reinforcements in the roof. It's electrocoated to fight rust, and covered with five more coats of paint.



A four-speed floor-mounted transmission (left) is standard on Pinto. You can also get the optional automatic, of course.

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Shown here is a 1973 Pinto Runabout with optional Ivy Glow paint, whitewall tires, luxury decor and deluxe bumper groups.

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